MAY, 1936

THE COMMUNIST

Review of the Month — A. B.

For a United Front May Day!
Statement of the Central Committee of the Communist Party

Akron: A New Chapter in Labor History
JOHN WILLIAMSON

Problems in Our Farmer-Labor Party Activities
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Japan, Outer Mongolia and the Chinese Liberation Movement
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FRITZ HECKERT

March 28, 1884-April 7, 1936

In revolutionary memory of Comrade Fritz Heckert, member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International; comrade-in-arms of Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, and Ernst Thaelmann; and a founder of the Communist Party of Germany, on whose Central Committee and Political Bureau he served until death.

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Review of the Month

Monopolies Deplore Class Struggle While Preparing Civil War—Labor Spies, Strikebreaking Agencies, and Private Armies—Expose Conspiracy and Demand Dissolution of Private Armies—Morgan-du Pont Want a Hitler—Thomas Uncertain of General United Front—Wider United Action or Backward to Disunity—Major Berry's Diplomacy—Labor's Non-Partisan League and Consulting the Conscience—Hillman and the Labor Party—Re-electing Roosevelt by Proposing to Sacrifice the Interests of Masses—Lewis Should Answer Our Questions—The Farmer-Labor Movement Goes on—If Dubinsky's Resignation Is Honorable, Why Can't All Resign?—Preaching Socialism for Future and Practising Opportunism in the Present—Roosevelt's Baltimore Speech—Three Measures Before Congress Will Make Good Roosevelt's Promises to the Youth—The Inter-American Peace Conference—Monroe Doctrine Is Central Issue—Mussolini and Ethiopia—Stop Shipment of American Oil—England, France, and League of Nations—Policies of Soviet Union—American Reactionaries Seek War Between Japan and Soviet Union—Lack of Unity and United Front

HARPER SIBLEY, President of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, deplores the stirring up of "hurtful class antagonisms for a momentary political advantage". Colby M. Chester, President of the National Association of Manufacturers, inspired by similar sentiments, presents a five-point program of which point 2 declares:

> "Progressive industry firmly believes in cooperation between employer and employee in the interests of each industry and of both groups, but we cannot accept class conflict as a basis for employer-employee relations."

The official spokesmen of the two most important capitalist organizations, both of which are dominated by big business, attempt to appear as helpless victims of "hurtful class antagonisms", innocently pleading for peace and cooperation.

It is hardly likely that this brazen hypocrisy will deceive many

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workers. The latter are too well familiar with the practical meaning of capitalist cooperation as practised daily in the mills, plants, and factories to fall for the honeyed appeals of Sibley and Chester. We must, therefore, assume that these gentlemen were directing themselves primarily, not to the workers, but to the middle classes. It is these that big business and the monopolies seek to win to their "cause". And what is this cause? It is to organize civil war against the working class and all toiling people. It is to reduce further the standard of living of the masses, including the middle classes. It is at the same time part of the strategy of a section of monopoly capital to defeat Roosevelt in the coming national elections.

When we say that these pleaders for peace and cooperation are actually organizing for waging civil war against the toiling people of this country, we are not exaggerating. It has been clear for some time that this is the true meaning of the rising capitalist reaction. It has been clear that this was the orientation of the Morgan-du Pont clique with its Liberty League, Crusaders, Minute Men, Talmadges, Hearsts, Coughlins, etc.

Now come the revelations of two Senate investigating committees: the Black Lobby Committee and the LaFollette Sub-Committee on Education and Labor. Both of these have so far only touched the bare surface of things, and there is a desperate effort on foot to stop these investigations. Yet from the little that has already been disclosed, the following is established beyond doubt. Most, if not all, of the large corporations, in whose name Sibley and Chester are pleading for peace and cooperation, have been storing up large supplies of tear gas, guns, and munitions, and are building up a large private army and a widespread net of espionage involving over 100,000 people. It has been further disclosed that the moving spirit of these preparations for civil war against the working people is big business, especially the Morgan-du Pont gang, but also some of the Rockefeller people—the same crowd which, through the speeches of Sibley and Chester, deplores the stirring up of "hurtful class antagonisms".

From the testimony taken thus far by the La Follette sub-committee it is evident that these civil war preparations of the monopolies are directed in the first instance to the destruction of the trade unions, and, especially to the prevention at all costs of the organization of the unorganized in the steel, rubber, and auto industries. In passing, it is important to observe that the opposition of the Hutchesons and Duffys, aided by William Green, to the organization of industrial unions, renders full aid and comfort to the trusts and monopolies that are preparing to use the methods of civil war against the organization of the unorganized in the basic industries.

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It is clear, at the same time, that these civil war preparations of the monopolies are directed, not only against the working class, but also against its allies—the toiling farmers, the Negroes, the middle classes. Big business is the enemy of all of these classes and groups. It opposes the demands of the toiling farmers, Negroes, and middle classes in the same way that it opposes the demands of the working class. It opposes relief to the toiling farmers and middle classes and combats the demand of equal rights for the Negroes no less implacably than it opposes, for instance, the 30-hour week, unemployment insurance, higher wages, etc. Yet big business knows that it is only the working class, organized economically and politically and conscious of its class aims, that can and will rally to itself the other exploited classes in a concerted struggle against the attacks of the monopolies upon the standards and rights of the working people. And knowing this, the monopolies seek to prevent the organization of the working class, to prevent the emergence of powerful industrial unions and of a mass Farmer-Labor Party, expecting thus to render the working class impotent to lead the fight for all exploited.

Morgan, du Pont, and Rockefeller are preparing to use the methods of civil war in order to prevent the working people from shifting the burden of the crisis and depression back to the rich. The honeyed speeches of Sibley and Chester are just so much camouflage to conceal these preparations.

What conclusions must we draw from these developments?

1. Make sure that the investigations will go on until this sinister conspiracy of the monopolies is fully exposed. We must rally the widest masses and their organizations around the demand of the Communist Party that the La Follette sub-committee carry through a complete and thorough investigation of all labor-spying and strike-breaking agencies and of all their ramifications and connections with the big corporations; that the scope of the investigation be so widened as to embrace all designs of capitalist reaction to curtail and destroy the standards and civil rights of the American people.

2. Prepare to launch a most intensive mass campaign, based upon the unions and including all organizations of workers, farmers, Negroes and middle classes, for the purpose of compelling the Roosevelt administration to pass legislation outlawing all labor-spying and strikebreaking activities and to dissolve at once all such existing agencies as well as the private armed gangs of the monopolies and corporations.

3. To exert all efforts to push forward the organizing drive in the steel, auto, and rubber industries.

4. To increase manifoldly the organizational and propaganda activities for the setting up of local and state Farm-Labor Parties

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and for the organization of a national Farmer-Labor Party.

It goes without saying that the Committee for Industrial Organization has a special role to play in this important fight. It is only in this fight that the workers in the basic industries will be organized into industrial unions.

* * *

W. CLEVELAND RUNYON, a "sentinel" of the Republic, seems to know exactly what the people want. In a letter to Mr. Lincoln, another "sentinel", made public by the Lobby Investigating Committee, Runyon writes:

> "The people are crying for leadership and not getting it. Our leaders are asleep. The Sentinels should really lead on the outstanding issue. *The old-line Americans of $1,200 a year want a Hitler.*" (*The New York Times*, April 18. Our emphasis—A.B.)

We had thought right along that this old-line American wanted a job, security of employment, relief from starvation, protection of his civil rights, higher wages, and higher income generally. We had also thought that precisely because this old-line American wants these things, he hates Hitler and all that Hitler stands for. But the Wall Street sharks, big business, the Liberty League and the Morgan-du Pont clique which stands behind all this reactionary outfit—these seem to have their own ideas as to what the old-line American *should want*. They want him to want a Hitler.

That is understandable. Morgan-du Pont, and capitalist reaction generally, would like to have a Hitler in the United States. They would like to see fascism established in this country. And for this they are working. The Lobby Investigating Committee has already thrown considerable light on the reactionary conspiracies of big business. The revelations of this investigation show that it is not the individual Runyon who has these fancy ideas but big capital and especially the Morgan-du Pont clique. It is this clique, which owns and controls one of the largest sectors of the national economy, that is building up the Crusaders, the Sentinels, the Minute Men, the Liberty League and all the other reactionary, semi-fascist and fascist groupings in the country.

In other words, the Lobby Investigating Committee, while seeking primarily to expose Roosevelt's opponents from the Right, has at the same time brought to light information that proves conclusively one of the most vital contentions of the Communist Party. It is, namely, the contention that capitalist reaction in the United States, as elsewhere, is thoroughly imbued with fascism; that the Liberty

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League with all its ramifications is an incipient fascist development; and that the moving spirit behind this are the monopolies, the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most aggressive circles of finance capital.

The Old Guard reactionary "Socialists", who have just been emphatically repudiated by the majority of the Socialist Party membership and voters in New York State, have followed the line of saying that the fascist danger in this country is not so acute as the Communist represent it. It would appear from the Old Guard sayings that the fascist danger in the United States is almost non-existent, that it is mostly an invention of the Communists in order to "frighten" the Socialists and others into accepting the united front.

It was evident that this reactionary nonsense was deceiving very few people. It certainly did not deceive the majority of the Socialist Party membership. Nor could it deceive the bulk of the organized labor movement. And that is why such people as Lewis and Hillman felt it necessary to speak up, though not yet in the correct way, against the danger of fascist reaction in the United States. The latest disclosures of the Lobby Investigating Committee should dispose finally of the nonsense (by no means innocent) peddled around by the Old Guard "Socialists" that the fascist danger in this country is a Communist "invention".

This, however, is not all. To see the fascist danger, and to see it where it really lies (in the most reactionary circles of finance capital), is important. We hope the latest disclosures of the Lobby Investigating Committee will help further to clarify the understanding of Norman Thomas on this crucial question. But this is no abstract theoretical problem. It is a practical political question (the central question) of how to ward off the victory of capitalist reaction, of how to prevent the coming of fascism in this country. The Communists have proposed a line of action. It is daily united struggle of the working class and all toilers against the capitalist offensive, against reaction in all its manifestations, for the defense of the standards and rights of the masses, for the political independence of the working class and its alliance with all the other toilers. This means the united front, trade union unity, and the organization of the unorganized into industrial unions, the Farmer-Labor Party.

It would appear, however, that Norman Thomas, for example, while apparently realizing the danger of fascism in this country, is still uncertain as to whether this calls for the acceptance of the united front policies proposed by the Communist Party to the Socialist Party. He gives expression once again to this uncertainty in his latest statement in the *Socialist Call*, also published in the *Daily Worker*. He reiterates his position in favor of united front actions on specific

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matters, but argues against what he calls a "general united front". And in this way:

> ". . . we might form a general united front, with permission to differ in some matters, if that were clearly the way in America to win the workers to our cause and to block fascism. On the contrary, in America in the year 1936, it is not."

It seems to us that the issue needs clarification. For one thing, we cannot accept as real the deep differentiation drawn by Norman Thomas between united front actions on specific issues and a general united front. To us there is something artificial and mechanical in such a differentiation, especially when one is put up against the other in such an irreconcilable way. To be sure, there is a difference. It is the difference between fighting jointly in a sporadic way, on isolated issues here and there, and fighting jointly always and everywhere on all the immediate and burning issues confronting the working people in this country. It is an important difference, but only one of the *degree and maturity* of the development of the united front between the Socialists and Communists. This is how the difference appears in life. Here it appears as a development from sporadic and isolated united front actions to systematic united struggles on all immediate issues of the class struggle. From which it follows that all sincere opponents of capitalist reaction, let alone Socialists and Communists, must seek to promote most rapidly the united front from the elementary and immature, to the higher and mature stage.

But it is an entirely different matter to present the thing as though united actions on specific issues make unnecessary a systematic and general united front, or that specific united fronts are a substitute for a general one. This sort of differentiation is artificial, mechanical, and harmful. This is a differentiation that tends to check the development of united actions even on specific issues.

Why does Thomas draw this sort of differentiation? He has not yet fully explained it. He seems to believe, from the quotation above, that in America, in 1936, a general united front is not "clearly" the way to block fascism. Well, how clear must that become? Must we wait until fascism has secured a mass base and capitalist reaction has opened widely the road of fascism's coming to power? It is hardly likely that Thomas wants to wait for that. Then what is it? He certainly cannot believe that the Socialist Party itself can block the road to fascism. This being the case, there is only one conclusion to be drawn. Norman Thomas may entertain the idea that fascism will be blocked without the Communists. And to this the answer is: it is a dangerous idea. Without the Communists always means against the Communists. Life has proved that beyond doubt. Without the Communists means *with* the reactionaries in the labor movement. It means

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with the bourgeoisie. It means class collaboration with the bourgeoisie as against united action with the Communists. It means splitting the working class further, instead of uniting it. It means precisely the policy of German Social-Democracy which paved the way for fascism. We assume that Norman Thomas does not want that. Surely the Left Socialists do not want it. But policies have their own logic. One cannot stand too long on the untenable position of partial united actions as *against* a general united front. Life is compelling the abandonment of this position, because it is, by its very nature, a transient and temporary one. If one does not move from it *forward* to the general united front, and move rapidly, one is compelled to move *backward* to the discredited positions of the Old Guard.

We urge the Left Socialists and the Socialist Party to move forward. We do so in the interests of combatting capitalist reaction and of blocking fascism in the United States.

* * *

ANNOUNCING the formation of Labor's Non-Partisan League, and answering a question, George L. Berry said:

> "I have not asked any Communists to participate. They will have to let their consciences be their guides." (*The New York Times*, April 2.)

This is supposed to be both clever and diplomatic. But why the diplomacy? American labor today needs more than ever plain speaking. There is plenty of rotten diplomacy in the air, as it is. All capitalist politicians, Republican as well as Democrat, are "diplomatizing" with labor and with the toiling farmers. Even the Manufacturers Association and the Chambers of Commerce are doing that. And for what purpose? To befuddle labor, to confuse it, to prevent labor for asserting its *independent* political might in the coming elections. Is that what Berry is trying to accomplish with his diplomacy?

"Major" Berry has his categories twisted. It is not the Communists that have to consult their conscience—the conscience of the American working class; it is Berry and the other organizers of the Non-Partisan League. It is they who have to consult that conscience. And not only consult but be guided by it.

The official announcement of the formation of the League, as given out by Berry, follows out almost literally the policy of blanket endorsement of Roosevelt as proposed to the last miners' convention by John L. Lewis. The Communists have spoken out plainly on that policy. They have said that the re-election of Roosevelt in 1936 will not defeat capitalist reaction. It certainly will not weaken its

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main source—the most reactionary circles of finance capital. They have said further: if the re-election of Roosevelt *is bought at the expense of organizing the independent economic and political power of the workers and their allies;* if this re-election is achieved by means of slackening the organization of the unorganized, by means of abstaining from waging strike struggles for higher wages and better conditions; if this re-election is achieved at the expense of the growing and developing Farmer-Labor Party; if this is how the Lewis policy will be carried out, then the re-election of Roosevelt, far from weakening reaction, will give the monopolies a fresh chance to intensify and sharpen their attacks upon the working people.

The Communists have said in effect that just because they have consulted and are guided by the conscience and the interests of the working class and its allies, they have adopted this position.

It would seem from the official announcement, as made by Berry, that Labor's Non-Partisan League proposes to seek the re-election of Roosevelt at the expense of the most vital economic and political interests of the toiling masses of this country. The Committee for Industrial Organization, which is the backbone of the Non-Partisan League, is not much in evidence in the organization of the unorganized in the basic industries; it does not offer much help in the struggles of the unemployed; it seems to have forgotten completely the toiling farmers and the sharecroppers whom the Roosevelt administration is sacrificing mercilessly to the interests of the large agrarians and the capitalist farmers.

Labor's conscience, its class consciousness, is rebelling against such policies. And the Communists are seeking to give conscious expression to it.

The official announcement says not a word about the Farmer-Labor Party. We have asked questions, but have got no answer. We said: while the labor movement is discussing the various positions on the question of Roosevelt (and there is clearly a difference), why can't we all join in the building of *local and state* Farmer-Labor Parties—to secure local governments and to elect Farmer-Laborites to Congress? The official announcement answers none of these crucial questions. Lewis said that he was not in favor of supporting the Democratic Party as a party. We proposed that this be stated more clearly and definitely. We proposed that the organizers of the Non-Partisan League say plainly that neither the Democratic nor the Republican Party can serve the interests of labor and its allies because these are capitalist parties. This is, of course, not all that has to be done. Yet it seems this is something on which the labor movement, excepting the reactionaries, could agree on. But the official announcement says nothing about it.

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Does it not appear that the re-election of Roosevelt is sought at the expense of the Farmer-Labor Party movement?

True, Berry again tried to be diplomatic about it when answering questions of reporters. *The New York Times* (April 2) reports this as follows:

> "In reply to further questions he declared that 'I dare say the organization will continue after election'.
>
> "Asked whether this continuance might lead to the formation of a third party after 1936, he replied: 'Perhaps. We may want to cross the stream later.' "

Perhaps and maybe later. Meanwhile do nothing in an independent political way. Just throw yourselves completely at the mercy of Roosevelt.

And what is the purpose of this diplomacy? It is to exploit the growing movement for a Farmer-Labor Party in the interests of Roosevelt's re-election. It is to exploit this movement in order to sacrifice it. And who will gain by it? Capitalism will. And under the present circumstances it means that capitalist reaction will gain by it, the re-election of Roosevelt notwithstanding.

Of course, there are various shades and shadings among the organizers of Labor's Non-Partisan League. Hillman, for example, has been reported as having spoken more definitely on the question.

> "Mr. Hillman . . . explained that Labor's Non-Partisan League may become the basis for a Labor Party after the 1936 campaign." (*The New York Times*, April 10.)

Not much comfort in that either. And when we recall that the union of which Hillman is president has for a long time been committed to the organization of a Labor Party, Hillman's present statement is clearly a move backward from the position of his union. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that Hillman's present position, regardless of his wishes, is a position which tends to sacrifice the movement for a Farmer-Labor Party in the interests of Roosevelt's re-election.

But the movement will not be sacrificed. The rank and file in the unions, and the truly progressive forces within them, cannot and will not allow it. It should be evident by now even to the blind that the movement for a Farmer-Labor Party is today a *mass movement* growing and organizing. The movement is growing in the labor unions, which are its main base. At the same time it is making headway among the toiling farmers and middle classes, as well as among the Negroes. The decision of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party actively to engage in helping to build local and state parties, to promote the election of Farmer-Labor congressmen in various parts of

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the country, and to assist in the launching of a national party—these decisions, when put into life, will energize the Farmer-Labor Party movement still further. It will also be possible, and we should work for it, to bring about united actions between the Farmer-Labor Party movement and the adherents of Labor's Non-Partisan League in the building of local and state Farmer-Labor Parties and in the election of Farmer-Laborites to Congress.

From the above it is clear why we cannot qualify as "honorable" the resignation of Dubinsky from the Socialist Party in order to secure a free hand for the support of Roosevelt. Still less can we understand the position of Norman Thomas and some of his followers in considering Dubinsky's act as something that can be praised. What is there praiseworthy in it? What is there honorable in it?

If Dubinsky thought that the interests of labor require that it throw itself at the mercy of Roosevelt, why did he not propose this policy, honestly and "honorably", to the Socialist Party? Surely, if the policy of Dubinsky (according to himself) is good for labor and for the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union as part of labor, it ought to be good for the Socialist Party, too. Why didn't Dubinsky come to his party with his position and arguments? We hope he would have been defeated. But that would have been the honest thing to do. As it is, what have we got? Dubinsky seeks to put his union behind Roosevelt (presumably) in the belief that he is doing the right thing for labor but does not even try to win his own party to do this same right thing. And the official spokesman of his party, Norman Thomas, far from condemning Dubinsky's act as desertion, praises it as "honorable". But if this is "honorable", why shouldn't other Socialists do the same thing? And then what becomes of the Socialist Party and its opposition to Roosevelt?

Strange. Very strange. Norman Thomas seems to be suffering very much because of the "political opportunism" of the Communist Party, whatever that may mean. Yet he praises the desertion of Dubinsky to Roosevelt and says not a critical word on the Lewis policy of subordinating labor to Roosevelt.

It almost looks like a division of labor (we don't say it is). Objectively it would work out like this: some Socialists stay in the Socialist Party and preach socialism for the future, while others resign "honorably" from the Socialist Party to do the dirty opportunism for the present, in this way satisfying both sides of the business.

Clearly, this is as far from a class-struggle policy as anything can be. It is a policy of abandoning the masses to Roosevelt and to the Non-Partisan League. It is a policy which abandons the fight against

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Roosevelt *among the masses*—the only place where the fight counts. Left Socialists cannot support such a policy. Left Socialists are in duty bound to support and follow a policy of class struggle. And in the present political situation, with the present alignment of class forces, the policy of class struggle demands a struggle for the Farmer-Labor Party as carried on by the Communist Party.

* * *

ROOSEVELT'S Baltimore speech was, of course, an election campaign speech, directed primarily towards getting the young voters for Roosevelt. It is estimated that there will be from eight to nine million new voters in 1936, and Roosevelt is not overlooking them. The President came to the young voters with a message that, on the surface, is bound to make an appeal. The question is: how much substance and sincerity does that appeal contain?

It has already been pointed out that, if Roosevelt means half of what he says, he has a simple and direct way to put his words into deeds. He spoke of the great many jobs that "would be created if the great majority of people who are now over 65 . . . were in a position to retire in security for the balance of their days on earth". If the President means what he says, why does he not get his party to adopt the Frazier-Lundeen Bill? This is precisely the measure that will enable all toiling people over 60 to maintain themselves without having to compete (in vain) for jobs.

Roosevelt spoke of the need of shortening the working week, stability of employment, and minimum wages. But if he means what he says, why does he not get his party to adopt the Connery Bill for the 30-hour week. Sure, big business is deadly opposed to that Bill; but labor is for it. And it is the kind of a bill that would tend to create more jobs.

And if the President really means to help the youth, why does he not get his party to adopt the Youth Act now before Congress? This Act is championed by the American Youth Congress and by large sections of the labor movement.

In other words, there are now three measures before Congress (the Frazier-Lundeen Bill, the Connery Bill, and the Youth Act) that would achieve precisely those results that Roosevelt said he was aiming at. But Roosevelt's party, which dominates Congress, does not want to adopt these measures. What does Roosevelt himself do about it? Nothing. On the face of things, he seems to be opposed to these measures.

Apparently anticipating such criticism, the President delivered himself of the following:

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> "In regard to all these problems there are counsellors these days who say: 'Do nothing'; other counsellors who say: 'Do everything.' Common sense dictates an avoidance of both extremes. I say to you: 'Do something' and when you have done something, if it works, do it some more; and if it does not work, do something else."

That is old stuff. And it was never true. It is not true that the Hoover crowd and the Liberty League stand for a policy of "do nothing". Big business, for whom these reactionaries speak, is doing a good deal to rob and plunder the masses, to destroy their civil liberties. These reactionaries are very energetic people, and the recent Congressional investigations (munitions, lobby, labor and education) prove that conclusively. Nor it is true that the bills which we have mentioned (Frazier-Lundeen, Connery, and the Youth Act) propose to "do everything". Not at all. Everything will be done only with the overthrow of capitalism which Roosevelt is defending and protecting. Only a Soviet government will begin to do everything to assure a life of plenty and security to the American people. These Bills only propose to do the very minimum that is necessary under the circumstances, and that is possible within the framework of capitalism.

Thus, it is seen that Roosevelt is building up here a non-existent line-up for the purpose of presenting himself as the champion of "common sense" as against "both extremes". The true line-up is altogether different. Roosevelt and his Right opponents both stand on the same fundamental positions—the positions of capitalism. This is basic. Roosevelt's Right opponents are ready *to do everything* to make the toiling masses pay for the crisis and to save capitalism, including the further shattering of the standards of living of the masses and the destruction of their civil liberties. Not only are the reactionaries ready, but they are actually doing it, day in day out. This is a far cry from "doing nothing", as Roosevelt tries to represent them. And what is Roosevelt doing in the situation? Is he effectively checking the reactionaries? Not at all. Truly, he is doing only a "little something" to shame them; and when the reactionaries cry out loudly against it, he tends to give up even the little something. In this sense, one can speak of the President's position as one of "doing something"— doing something to shame the reactionaries.

As to doing everything for the toiling masses, yes, this is the position of the Communists. That is why we stand for the socialist revolution and Soviet power, which alone can do it. Meanwhile, and in preparation for it, a good deal can be done within the framework of capitalism to lighten the burden of the masses at the expense of the monopolies. That is why the Communists call upon the masses to build the Farmer-Labor Party and to fight for such partial meas-

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ures as the Frazier-Lundeen Bill, the Youth Act, the Marcantonio Bill, and the Connery Bill.

Roosevelt, and those labor leaders who give him a blanket endorsement, cannot escape responsibility for the fact that the first year of the Roosevelt recovery has seen a tremendous increase in the profits of the monopolies and corporations and a worsening of the conditions of the workers and all toilers. The April Bulletin of the National City Bank shows that 2,010 industrial, public utility, and financial companies scored a 42 per cent increase in net earnings during 1935. During the same period, according to the American Federation of Labor sources, real wages have declined while the intensification of labor (lengthening of hours and speed up) has increased. And the conditions of the unemployed have become worse.

There is no doubt that the policy of depending upon Roosevelt had a good deal to do with these results. And yet neither Lewis, nor Hillman, nor Howard, nor any of the other organizers of Labor's Non-Partisan League will discuss frankly with the workers this situation.

* * *

THE preparations for the Inter-American Peace Conference, suggested by President Roosevelt, and which is to be held in Buenos Aires, are apparently meeting with some serious difficulties. This was to be expected, of course.

Carlos Lamas, the Argentine Foreign Minister, transmitted to Roosevelt a draft treaty for discussion at the Conference, which treaty the United States government does not seem to like very much. Naturally so. This draft treaty proposes, among other things, to reaffirm the principle of the Montevideo convention of 1933 that "no state has the right to interfere in the internal or external affairs of another". It also proposes that no government shall use force or diplomatic intervention for the collection of debts and the formation of bondholders' committees in connection with the collection of money on defaulted bonds. These are only some of the Argentine proposals which seem to displease the spokesmen of Wall Street and also the United States State Department.

It is safe to assume that British imperialism, chief rival of "our own" in Latin America, had something to do with inspiring Carlos Lamas to make these proposals. British imperialism does not at all cherish the idea of this Inter-American Peace Conference resulting in an extension and strengthening of United States' imperialist influence in the countries of South America. London knows very well that this is what Roosevelt is aiming at. Naturally, London tries to throw a monkey wrench into the affair.

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If we believe Secretary Hull, the purpose of the Conference is "to set an example to the world of friendly cooperation and enlightened internationalism." (*The New York Times*, April 15.) This sounds very pleasing; but it is not the truth. Or, rather, it is only a small fraction of the truth. The main idea of Wall Street and of the Roosevelt Administration in working for the Inter-American Peace Conference is to promote the fortunes of American imperialism in Central and South America in a somewhat new way. Instead, as formerly, of operating by itself with the help of United States Marines and the undisguised use of the Big Stick, Roosevelt proposes to achieve the same results by means of collective action. Marines and the Big Stick are not to be eliminated; but it is proposed to use them with the "consent" of the other countries in Latin America, or at least with the consent of some of them.

The New York Times puts the matter very nicely. It says:

> "More than two years ago the Roosevelt administration disclaimed that interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine which asserted our right to intervene *single-handed* in the affairs of any of our neighbors. . . . If we were to intervene in the affairs of any other American nation, it would be only because the failure of orderly processes of government had become *'the joint concern* of the whole continent in which we are all neighbors'."

The thing is simple. Instead of the United States intervening "single-handed", let us try to have the intervention done "jointly", with the approval of some of the other countries, such as Cuba, Guatemala, and others whose governments are already mere puppets of Yankee imperialism. *The New York Times* proceeds to make its meaning even more plain:

> "However little we may like to think so, a situation may arise at any time in which the breakdown of law and order in one of the weaker Latin-American states, and the consequent threat to foreign lives and property, will make some form of intervention inevitable and necessary. It is plainly our responsibility to help establish a new system of inter-American law under which any necessary intervention will be undertaken not by the United States alone, but by all American nations, expressing through their common action 'the joint concern of a whole continent'."

It is, in other words, a very nice scheme of re-establishing the old Monroe Doctrine on the basis of the "consent" of the victims of this doctrine—the peoples of the Caribbean, Central, and South Americas. That is American imperialism, Roosevelt style.

It is clear, therefore, that the Roosevelt Administration is planning through this Conference to initiate a fresh imperialist drive in Latin America, to squeeze England and Japan a bit, and above all

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to secure "common" action against the anti-imperialist people's movements in the smaller countries of that continent.

It is also clear, or should be, that the Argentine Foreign Minister is not the proper kind of champion of the independence and liberty of the Latin-American countries and peoples. The champion of this independence, the fighter against foreign imperialism, whether American or British, is the anti-imperialist movement of the Latin-American countries—the movement that is represented by such anti-imperialist alliances as those of Brazil, Cuba, and Mexico. These are the genuine forces that are mobilizing the toiling masses to fight against foreign imperialism and for national independence.

These anti-imperialist movements, which base themselves primarily upon the masses and their independent struggles, as can be seen in Cuba, Brazil, and Mexico, are also trying to utilize the contradictions between American and British imperialism to promote the liberation struggle. This is one thing. But it is an entirely different thing in the case of the Argentine Foreign Minister. No doubt, in making the proposals he did, he was moved by genuine fear that the Inter-American Peace Conference may result in a strengthening of Yankee imperialism in his own country as well as in Latin America generally. And in this sense, justice is on his side. And the demands which he put forward in the draft treaty are just demands that should be supported by the American working class and all toilers.

Yet, considering that he has not proved to be a genuine anti-imperialist (certainly, the Argentine government is not), there is a serious danger that he will either retreat from the position taken in the draft treaty and capitulate to American imperialism or that he (and his government) will become mere puppets in the hands of the British government for its imperialist rivalries against the American imperialist government.

It is therefore the task of the American working class and its allies, the task of the Farmer-Labor movement, to render at this time all possible and active support to the anti-imperialist movements of Latin America. The peoples of these countries are now faced with a fresh attempt on the part of Wall Street, the big monopolies, by utilizing the unstable situation in Europe, to enslave economically and politically the weaker countries of this continent, especially South America. Wall Street wants to accomplish there what it did in Cuba—in the Caribbean and Central America generally. This is the aim that Wall Street seeks to accomplish through the Inter-American Peace Conference. The peoples and countries of Latin America will offer resistance, no doubt. Especially will this resistance find its expression through the people's anti-imperialist movements, in all of

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which the Communist Parties are playing an important role. This resistance will also find some expression, though not consistent and clear, through some of the Latin-American delegates at the Conference. The Argentine draft treaty is one indication of it. This resistance to imperialism the American masses must support actively.

We must mobilize the American masses in opposition to the Monroe Doctrine—the doctrine that stands for Yankee imperialist oppression of the peoples of Latin America. At the same time we must also mobilize support for the struggle against British and Japanese imperialism in Latin America. In short, we must mobilize the American masses in support of the anti-imperialist movements in Latin America, opposing all policies of the Roosevelt Administration that seek to impose upon the peoples of these countries the domination of Wall Street.

* * *

HITLER, Mussolini, and the Japanese military-fascist clique are no doubt deriving great satisfaction and very tangible comfort from the inability of the League of Nations to check aggression and effectively preserve peace. The cause of the League's virtual paralysis is quite evident. It is, first of all, the conflicts and imperialist rivalries between England and France. It is, secondly, the so-called "neutrality" policy of the Roosevelt Administration which encourages the aggressors and is seized upon by English and French imperialism as a pretext for inaction.

Mussolini, helped considerably by American oil, has scored lately some important victories in Ethiopia. Of course, he is still very far from having conquered Ethiopia, and he is still further from having assured his domination there. But he has made considerable advances in that direction, due principally to the British-French conflicts and to serious errors of the Ethiopian military command which risked head-on collision instead of depending primarily upon the tactics of what is called "guerilla warfare". Some experts believe that it is still possible to correct some of these military errors and in this way greatly strengthen the resistance of the Ethiopians. There still remain, however, the British-French conflicts, which do not allow the League to act effectively.

The need of the moment is clearly the utmost intensification of the independent mass struggles in defense of Ethiopia, especially to prevent the shipment of oil to Mussolini.

Still more important is the effect of the Ethiopian developments upon the general world situation. The most vital point here, as far as the capitalist governments are concerned, is the tendency of a

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section of British imperialism to make a bargain with Hitler. Another vital point, as yet insufficiently stressed, is the tendency of a part of American imperialism to see a war between Japan and the Soviet Union. It is evident that these two tendencies in the British and American imperialism respectively aggravate and sharpen the war danger to a very great extent.

If not for these two tendencies, it is safe to say that the League of Nations would have been able to deal more effectively with Mussolini's war in Ethiopia, serving notice at the same time upon Hitler and Japan that there is a collective force in existence able and willing to maintain peace.

Now more than ever the Soviet Union stands out in the League of Nations as the only country fighting genuinely for peace. No one will dare deny that today. It is also the only country that urges full equality for Germany in the League of Nations on the basis of tangible guarantee by Hitler that he will respect his obligations and the principles of collective security. And if he does not give such guarantees, then the Soviet Union urges the organization of collective security without Hitler.

The important question to be answered in this connection is: why is it that the capitalist governments (France and England in the League and the United States outside) think they can still afford to play the game they are playing which encourages the war makers and endangers the peace of the world. The answer is: lack of unity in the working class, lack of a united struggle for peace by the toiling masses in each country and internationally. That is the answer.

The Second and Amsterdam Internationals, pressed by the reactionary reformists in the British and a few other labor movements, still refuse to accept the offer of the Communist International to organize united actions on a world scale in favor of peace, while the adherents of the united front in the Socialist Parties are not fighting energetically enough to bring about the united front.

It is quite clear that as long as the British government feels that the British reactionary reformists—the opponents of the united front—will have their way in the labor movement, this government will continue to play the dangerous game of encouraging Hitler. A united and fighting working class in England would stop that game in short order. It is also quite clear that as long as Roosevelt feels that the Lewis-Hillman blanket support places labor's vote in his pocket, he will continue to fiddle around with the question of peace, thus encouraging Japan to prepare for war against the Soviet Union, which means also encouraging Hitler and Mussolini.

Those who complain, and justly, over the inability of the League of Nations to function more effectively as a check upon the war

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makers, should realize clearly that the basis of it all is the lack of systematic, independent, and united action by the masses in favor of peace, nationally and internationally. They should realize that the chief force of struggle for peace is the united front against fascism and war of the widest masses of toilers in collaboration with the peace struggles of the Soviet Union.

To build this united front, to make the trade unions the basis of it, and to draw into this struggle the toiling farmers, theNegroes, and the middle classes, most especially the youth and women, is the most burning task of the moment.

A. B.

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For a United Front May Day!

(Statement of the Central Committee, Communist Party, U.S.A.)

Down Tools—Demonstrate in the Streets; For the Unity of Action by All Toilers in Defense of Their Living Standards, Their Civil Liberties, and in Defense of Peace

TO ALL WORKERS, TOILING FARMERS, NEGROES, MEN, WOMEN, AND YOUTH:

On May First the workers of the entire world will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of that day which was born out of the struggle of the American working class for the eight-hour day. May Day is the day when the workers of the world demonstrate their international solidarity. On this day they close ranks and press forward to new struggles.

Let us down tools on May 1. Let us go out into the streets and demonstrate that, in this seventh year of the crisis, we refuse to go hungry. Let the rulers in Wall Street and Washington hear that we will fight for bread for our families, for peace and against the forces of reaction. Let the unity of labor defeat the menace of fascism in this country. *Let unity between Socialists and Communists blaze the way to unity of all toilers.* Let us make this the May Day of the united front, of a united working class.

UNITY OF LABOR TO SMASH FASCISM

The riders of reaction are abroad in the land. Hearst, the Liberty Leaguers, all the reactionary forces of Wall Street, have launched a bitter attack against our democratic rights, our civil liberties, against our working class organizations. Their aim is to make the United States one vast concentration camp, to make of the workers the serfs of the open-shoppers.

Let the workers demonstrate in the streets on May Day against these reactionary forces. Let the whole country ring with the giant voice of labor. Let the bankers and industrialists and their puppets in the Supreme Court know that under no circumstances will the American working class permit them to establish fascism in this country.

TO FIGHT FOR BREAD IS TO FIGHT THE BANKERS

Our demonstrations must be a living defiance against reaction. We must serve notice that we will not yield an inch to the pressure

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of reaction. *We must show through the united front that labor can and will prevent the victory of fascism.*

The bankers and employers have waxed fat under the New Deal. Their profits have multiplied by hundreds of per cent. While they hoard their millions, the children of the workers are deprived of milk and bread by the high cost of living. The New Deal has turned out to be a raw deal for the American workers.

They boast of recovery, of the upturn in production. But this recovery has only brought increased profits for the manufacturers and bankers. For the workers it has brought back-breaking speed-up, wages have been cut, and food and rent have soared sky-high. There are still twelve to fourteen million workers unemployed.

In this, the richest country in the world, half the population is living below the poverty line. Yet the reactionaries—Hearst and the Liberty League—are demanding that all relief be cut off, that nothing should be done to aid the distress of the working population. And Roosevelt steadily gives in to their demands.

EVERY CITY A UNION TOWN

Make of May Day a day of struggle *for higher wages, for the six-hour day, for the five-day week without reduction in pay, for the end of company unions and yellow dog contracts.* On that day the organized workers must extend their hands in fraternal greetings to the unorganized. We must pledge that we will help to bring millions of unorganized workers into the trade unions and build a powerful American Federation of Labor, based on industrial unionism. *Make every city a union city.*

We must demand that the unemployed receive adequate relief, that wherever a factory is closed, *the government must open it up and put men back to work* at union wages. The demands of the unemployed for the passage by Congress of the Frazier-Lundeen Unemployment, Old Age and Social Insurance Bill must be echoed by all labor. The interests of the unemployed and the employed are the same. A blow against one is a defeat for the other. *Let all workers, employed and unemployed, young and old, demand genuine social insurance, demand that the aged be well taken care of, and that the youth shall be given jobs and the right to education.*

May Day is labor's day. But it is also the day of all those oppressed by reaction, of all deprived of jobs and homes. The bulk of the farm population is bankrupt and is being steadily reduced to a landless peasantry. Labor and farmer, join hands on May Day and demonstrate for the needs of the toiling farmers. Demand immediate and adequate relief; lighten the tax and debt burden; demand fair prices for the farmers at the expense of the monopolies and

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speculators; demand land and farm implements for the poor tenants and sharecroppers.

THE NEGRO PEOPLE

Labor must extend its hand to the Negro people, doubly oppressed and exploited by the white rulers. The life of the Negro people has been turned into one big horrible Scottsboro. *White labor cannot be free as long as black labor is enslaved.* May Day must become a day of struggle against lynchings and discrimination, and a day of struggle for the full political, social and economic equality of the Negro people.

We must resist the efforts of the bosses to profit from child labor. No child should have its life warped and stunted by back-breaking toil in factory or mill. *We must fight for the abolition of all child labor.*

On May Day we must have in our ranks all working women and all the wives of workers and farmers. We must defend them against the attacks of the reactionaries who wish to reduce them to beasts of burden, to make them mere breeding animals for the warmongers. We must fight for their special interests and needs. *Let us demand full equality for women.*

NEEDS OF THE YOUTH

The youth of America, the flower of the country, has no prospect of jobs or a future. Let us demonstrate on May Day for the vital needs of American youth. *Let us demand the immediate adoption by Congress of the American Youth Act.*

May Day wil come this year at a time when the peace of the world is threatened more than at any time since the end of the last World War. Italian fascism is trying to enslave the people of Ethiopia and is sacrificing the lives and welfare of hundreds of thousands of Italian toilers. Japanese militarists daily rob the Chinese people of new territory and are making feverish preparations to attack the Soviet Union. In Europe, Hitler stands ready to unleash Nazi hordes against the small nations of middle Europe and is trying to establish the domination of German imperialism with blood and iron. *The fascist warmongers are striving to form an alliance of all the capitalist powers for a "crusade" against the U.S.S.R.—citadel of socialism and the hope of the working class of the world.*

THE FIGHT FOR PEACE

Let us on May Day show our unbreakable determination to fight for peace. Let us unmask the diplomacy of the Roosevelt govern-

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ment, which preaches the policy of the "good neighbor", but forces the Latin-American countries to pay tribute to Wall Street. In the name of peace, Roosevelt is carrying on gigantic war preparations and has given the militarists and jingos a billion-dollar war budget.

Under the guise of neutrality the Roosevelt administration allows the shipment of materials for war to the fascist dictatorships—Italy, Japan, Germany. Our own reactionaries and jingos—Hearst, Coughlin and the Liberty League—encourage Hitler and Japanese militarism to attack the Soviet Union. *Let us press onward and build a real working class blockade against all munitions shipments and the shipment of all war materials to the fascist war machines.*

We cannot trust Roosevelt's smooth words about neutrality. His policy is helping to pave the way so that the bankers can drag the United States into the next world war, just as his predecessor, Wilson, went to war to protect the profits of the House of Morgan.

DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

We must demonstrate our determination to join hands with workers throughout the world in the fight for peace, in the fight against the instigators of a new world war—fascist Germany and militarist Japan. *Let us unite with the toilers of the whole world to keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world, to save humanity from the horrors of a new world slaughter. Let us on May First, the traditional day of socialism, pledge ourselves to defend the only country of socialism—the Soviet Union.* Let the American working class show that it stands solidly behind the peace policy of the Soviet Union, the only country which plans no aggressive action, which wants to enslave no people, which has no capitalists trying to coin money out of death and destruction.

On May First, the day on which the working class demonstrates for its own class interests, *let us raise high the banner of struggle for independent working class political action.* The three years of the New Deal have shown the workers and farmers that they cannot depend on the two old capitalist parties to fight for their interests. The Democratic Party and the Republican Party may have differences as to how the loot taken from the toilers should be divided. But they are the parties of Wall Street, owned and directed by the banks and monopolies.

FOR A FARMER-LABOR PARTY!

Do not rely upon Roosevelt, who uses high-sounding words against the reactionaries but who on every issue retreats before them and carries out their dictates. Do not believe those labor leaders like John L. Lewis, who ask you to line up behind Roosevelt and to

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abandon the building of a Farmer-Labor Party. This is the road to disunity. This will keep the people chained to the Democratic and Republican Parties, to the parties of Wall Street. This will weaken the independent force of labor and its alliance with the farmers and city middle classes. This leaves us completely at the mercy of Roosevelt and the Liberty Leaguers.

If we are to make the rich pay the cost of the crisis, if we are to relieve the workers and farmers of the unbearable burden of taxation, if we are to give work to the unemployed and hope to the youth, if we are to prevent the victory of fascism in the United States, if we want to defend and preserve peace then we must build the people's front against war and fascism—a Farmer-Labor Party.

As we march through the streets and raise our voices in protest against fascism, let us extend the hand of solidarity to the victims of class war in the United States and throughout the capitalist world. Le us demand the freedom of Tom Mooney, the Scottsboro boys, the Sacramento prisoners, and all those framed and imprisoned by the capitalists for their struggle against reaction and their efforts in behalf of the working class.

RELEASE ERNST THAELMANN!

Let the Nazi rulers hear us demand on May First that they release Ernst Thaelmann, Carl Von Ossietsky, and the tens of thousands of other anti-fascist victims of fascist terror in Austria, in Italy, and wherever the white terror rages. Let us demand the freedom of Luis Carlos Prestes, imprisoned and tortured because he fights to liberate the Brazilian people from the domination of Wall Street. Let us demand the immediate and safe release of the German Reichstag deputy Ewert and his wife from the torture chambers of Brazilian white terror. Let us support the fight of the Latin-American peoples for their national independence, and their struggle to free themselves from the yoke of American imperialism.

As we march on May Day let us remember that we live in the richest land in the world. There is wealth enough for everyone. Not a single man, woman or child would have to go hungry if the warehouses were opened, if the closed factories started to operate again, if human needs were put above the privileges of profit.

FOR SOCIALISM, FOR A SOVIET AMERICA!

No capitalist country is so ripe for socialism as the United States, where the toilers have built up the greatest productive plants in the world. *Inspired by the great victories of socialism in the Soviet Union, where unemployment has been abolished, where hundreds of nationalities live in peace, where the greatest culture in the history of the*

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world is being built, let us resolve that we in the United States will fight for the victory of socialism, for a Soviet America.

Workers, farmers, Socialists, Communists, trade unionists, unemployed, down tools on May Day. Demonstrate the power of the American working class. Make of labor's May Day parades a mighty fist challenging the tyranny and greed of the bankers and open-shoppers. Let this May Day become the day from which the American working class will advance to new victories.

Down tools on May First! All out into the streets! Build the mighty united front of the working class on May First!

For the six-hour day, for the five-day week without reduction in pay! For higher wages, against the high cost of living!

Make every city a union city! For a powerful American Federation of Labor based on industrial unionism!

For unemployment, old age and social insurance (the Frazier-Lundeen Bill)!

For full social, political and economic equality for the Negro people!

Jobs and schools for American youth! Demand the passage of the American Youth Act!

For a people's front against war and fascism! For a Farmer-Labor Party!

Keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world! Against Roosevelt's billion-dollar war budget!

Support the peace policy of the Soviet Union! Defend the Soviet Union—the Land of Socialism!

Follow the example of the Soviet Union! Forward to a Soviet America!

CENTRAL COMMITTEE,
COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.
Wm. Z. Foster, Chairman,
Earl Browder, General Secretary.

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Akron: a New Chapter in American Labor History

By JOHN WILLIAMSON

THE Goodyear rubber workers, 15,000 strong, with the support of the entire trade union and labor movement of Akron, have just written another glorious chapter of American labor history. This strike was a warning to the American Liberty League and all forces of reaction that the workers in the basic industries will not stand for new attacks on their living conditions. It will serve as a starting point for a new series of strike struggles in Ohio and surrounding areas.

The outcome of the Goodyear strike was of vital importance to the immediate future of unionism in the rubber industry and to the economic conditions of all workers in this industry. A defeat of the Goodyear strike would have meant, not only new attacks to smash all unionism in the rubber industry, but also a lengthening of hours, further cutting of wages, increased speed-up, and the strengthening of the company unions in the Goodrich, Firestone, and all the other plants. Because Akron is the rubber capital of the world, a defeat of the rubber workers would have immediately affected the very existence of all unionism in the city, even among the miscellaneous crafts.

The outcome of the Goodyear strike was also watched by the workers in surrounding mass production industries, like the auto and steel industries. Here was being enacted a living drama of the effectiveness of industrial unionism versus craft unionism. This was true insofar as the United Rubber Workers International is an industrial union and only in this way could it effectively struggle against the mighty octopus of the rubber industry—the Goodyear Rubber and Tire Company. Furthermore, it was an open secret that the Committee for Industrial Organization representatives were the constant advisers of the strike leadership. So every worker, who was turning to the promises of the Committee for Industrial Organization as a possible way out, had his eyes glued on Akron for five weeks.

The agreement finally wrested from the company which had repeatedly declared, "they would never negotiate with the union", won definite concessions for the men, although not all their demands were granted. The agreement was divided into two parts, one in

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writing, and a supplementary verbal agreement made by the representatives of the company in the presence of union representatives, and published in all the newspapers.

The agreement finally accepted won the following for the men:

1. Reinstatement of everybody, including all those laid off that participated in the strike, without discrimination or loss of service record. To insure return of everyone for the first week, a 24-hour shift to be established.

2. A pledge of the company to observe the 36-hour week, six-hour day in the tire and tube division, and in all other departments a maximum of 40 hours. The verbal agreement also provided "that as soon as possible the Reclaim Plant would be back on a six-hour day basis and that the Mechanical Goods department would probably work a greater portion of the time on a six-hour basis".

3. A provision that the management will meet with employees individually or through their chosen representatives on all questions of mutual interest. The supplementary verbal agreement added:

> "It is our view that the rights and privileges of your Committeemen and the precedure we have discussed with respect to conferences with the union properly come under paragraph No. 2. If this proposal is accepted, I assure you professionally that no objection will be raised by the company to the program which we have already outlined with respect to this subject matter.
>
> "The shop committee for the union will be given the opportunity to deal with their foremen during working hours when necessary.
>
> "The president of the local union, or his duly accredited representative, shall be accorded the right to accompany the chairman of any division committee, the Plant Legislative Committee or Special Committees, to confer with the personnel manager, general superintendent or factory manager, concerning matters of dispute arising between employees and the company."

4. A provision in the verbal agreement on seniority rights and the squadron question. (The latter represented a particular grievance, since the "flying squadrons" were chosen men specially trained by the company and sent to college, to be able to operate any department and later to be given special privileges and bonuses and at all times to be given automatically five-year seniority privileges over others.) The verbal agreement provided that when transferred out, the squad man is to be given credit in determining seniority right for the actual time he has been in the service of the company. This service shall be considered at the time of lay-off.

The above is a summary of the most important concessions won through this struggle. This left the question of wages to be rechecked department by department. It also meant that the demand

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of the union for withdrawal by the company of all support to the Industrial Assembly* had not been achieved and that no written agreement had been secured. Under the given conditions and relationship of forces, and because of the constant waverings on the part of the Goodyear local union and International Union leadership, this agreement was a definite victory and was so hailed by the Goodyear men and all other rubber workers. Only the militant character of the strike and the solidarity of all Akron labor, backed up by a threat of a general strike, forced the "almighty" Goodyear Company to retreat, just as it had forced strikebreaker Sheriff Flowers to change his mind about breaking the picket line. The credit for this goes to the great majority of the rank and file of the union, especially the 2,000 to 3,000 who manned the picket line. The concessions won strengthened the prestige of the union to go forward and win all of its demands. One of the picket captains at an open membership meeting of the Communist Party stated the issue quite effectively as follows: "Don't worry, boys, we have just transferred the picket line from outside the factory to inside the factory." This they have actually done. Since the return to work, several department sit-down strikes have occurred to enforce the agreement or chase out stray scabs.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE STRIKE AND THE ISSUES PROVOKING THE STRIKE

Several department sit-down strikes had occurred at the Firestone Company and had been successful. The men in the Goodrich and later in the Goodyear plants followed suit. If Firestone could win, why not we?—they reasoned. The Goodyear management, however, figured differently. They calculated that a stop had to be put to this, or the men in all departments would be organizing "sit-down" strikes—and where would it all end? The Goodyear Company, which prided itself on its 17-year-old company union (The Industrial Assembly), on the numerical weakness of the A. F. of L. union, and on the weakness of the Communist Party shop branch within the plant, took onto itself the task of "teaching these unruly agitators a lesson". The Goodyear Company, therefore, discharged an entire department of over 100 men who had engaged in a sit-down strike in protest against a lay-off of 70 men. The pent-up grievances of the men were let loose. More sit-down strikes occurred. When, after a few days, the company shut off the food to the departments, the plant was struck solid. This meant 14,000 men and women, of whom 3,000 were personnel and office workers.

* The company union of the Goodyear Company.

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The "almighty" Goodyear Company, with its 17-year-old company union had been struck. The news rapidly spread. Every rubber worker in town was aroused. The union leadership was dumbfounded. The strike, which had been brewing for two and a half years, only to be nipped in the bud twice before, due to illusions the workers had in President Roosevelt, Secretary of Labor Perkins, and Assistant Secretary of Labor McGrady, had now broken out. What next?

A PICTURE OF THE STRIKE

One must live through such a strike to get a complete picture of it. Suffice it here to emphasize that for five solid weeks, during sub-zero weather, there was a constant picket line eleven miles long around the three main Goodyear plants. Every few hundred feet were picket posts, with a large drum in which a fire was built. The names of these posts—"Camp Roosevelt", "Camp McGrady", etc. —still reflected some of the illusions of the strikers. The regulation picket line was 1,600 strong and 160 picket posts. At a few moments' notice, reserves were on hand, and not only from among the strikers. When the police decided to tear down the picket shanties one day, between 400 and 500 men from General Rubber and Tire Company left their machines and joined the fighting on the picket line. After the injunction was issued, and again when Nelson Sparks' vigilantes threatened to open the gates by force, more than 5,000 pickets were massed on the streets, including many from the Firestone, Goodrich, and Mohawk plants. All this showed the mass solidarity of all Akron labor behind the strikers. It was this fact and this alone which dictated the "hands off" policy of Sheriff Flowers and Mayor Schroy, after their first attempt to organize a "flying wedge" of police and deputies had failed and the Central Labor Union had immediately answered with a threat of general strike.

The fighting core of the strikers was the 2,000-3,000 pickets who patrolled those eleven miles for five weeks. They dictated the policy when the Houses, Dalyrimples and Burnses weakened. They, with the Communist Party members among them, were the steel rod of the strike.

FOUR CRITICAL STAGES IN THE STRIKE AND THE HESITATIONS OF THE UNION LEADERSHIP

During the five weeks of strike, there was experienced all the usual maneuvers of the company: injunctions; mobilization of the "loyal" employees demanding the right to work; threats to move the company; radio talks and full page advertisements; interven-

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tion of the Department of Labor and its ace strike-breaker, Mr. McGrady; and the organizing by the company of a Law and Order League.

There were four critical stages of the strike periods when the question of leadership was tested. In each of these, the Communist Party, through its daily contact with leaders of the picket line and through its general agitation, greatly influenced the correct outcome.

1. During the first entire week of the strike, the Goodyear local union had not yet officially entered the strike. On the contrary, International President Dalyrimple declared, "The strike is unauthorized!" "Sit-downs are unsound!" "Absolutely no sympathy strikes!" The president of the Goodyear local, House, declared, "The men made mistakes—but in spite of mistakes, we will support them." As a matter of fact, the original injunction quoted House to the effect that the strike was "an unauthorized strike". With such an attitude, the strikers' ranks would have been divided and their morale broken. Only the determined action of the striking union men plus the active work of the progressive leaders of the other locals, the progressive leadership of the Central Labor Union, and the leaflets of the Communist Party, finally forced the local union, after one week, to endorse the strike and take over active strike leadership in combination with the International Executive Board. At no time, however, was a broad strike committee established. This proved itself a weakness time after time.

2. During the second week of the strike, after the deputies of the sheriff had decided that, to "avoid bloodshed they had to withhold attempts to open the gates", the company got busy and had the full bench of judges, three Republicans and three Democrats, issue an injunction. Armed with an injunction, the Sheriff and police planned to open the gates to allow the "non-strikers" to re-enter. Any expression of the legalistic attitude, which prevailed in the Goodyear local leadership, would have meant breaking the strike, because of the relationship of forces. While the pickets, with the active support of the Firestone and Goodrich workers, answered the injunctions by a picket line 5,000 strong, the progressives, including the Communists in the Central Labor Union, under the leadership of President Tate, called an emergency meeting and adopted a resolution pledging support against the injunction and calling on every local union to vote for a general strike in support of the Goodyear workers if any pickets were attacked. The overwhelming majority of the 105 local unions voted favorably on this general strike proposal.

3. During the third week of the strike, when the most difficult moment arrived, Roosevelt's personal representative, strike-breaker McGrady, came to town and worked out the same plan which he

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has used to break so many strikes, namely: everyone to return to work and allow an arbitration committee of two from the company, two from the union, and a fifth representing "impartiality", to settle all points in dispute. The union leaders agreed to this. They never had confidence in either the strike or the men, and this was a way out. The Committee for Industrial Organization representatives tacitly agreed to this plan, and those of our Socialist friends among the C.I.O. organizers who claim the contrary, have still to show us one place where they spoke against it. While the union leaders were so ready to repeat the trust in Roosevelt of a year before and to call the strike off, without a single concession won and every possibility of victimization of the union leaders; while the C.I.O. organizers had to "dance to the tune of John L." and support McGrady because of Lewis' support of Roosevelt; the militants on the picket line marched into that union hall after listening to the Communist Party County Organizer over the radio and shouted down every proposal to accept the McGrady plan made by the leadership. As a result, all plans to vote on it were abandoned. The organized pressure of the rank and file saved the situation. McGrady left town making a statement against the Communist Party.

4. At the end of the fourth week of the strike, during which negotiations had been resumed secretly between the union and the company, the company came forward with its so-called last proposal. This was preceded by a barrage of propaganda and letters in the newspapers as to the need of settlement. The union leadership, again failing to maintain confidence in the strikers, refused to inform the strikers as to the conditions of the proposed settlement, under the plea that they were pledged to secrecy and could bring it only before a meeting of the strikers. However, the Goodyear company, eighteen hours before this meeting, went "on the air" with a full presentation of its settlement proposals and argumentation in support of them. Once again the union leadership allowed themselves to be outmaneuvered, and for these few hours the company took the offensive, trying to stampede everyone back to work on terms which meant absolutely nothing. The progressives, with active Communist participation, formulated skilfully a proposal which accepted, with some elaborations, certain proposals of the company, but amended the proposed settlement to include other major demands and sent back their negotiations committee so to inform the company. By this move, the strikers and the union again resumed the offensive but yet did not break off negotiations. On the contrary, they made it plain that they considered the fact that the company was willing to make any proposals for settlement as a definite weakening of the company's position.

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Here is a contrast in summary form of what the company proposed and what the 4,000 union members adopted:

The Company's Peace Proposal

1. All employees as of Feb. 2, to return to their jobs without discrimination.

2. The company will deal with all employees individually or through their chosen representatives.

3. The company will give notice to representatives of employees affected when wage rate adjustments are to be posted.

4. A standard 36-hour week and 6-hour day will prevail in tire divisions and any change in these hours per week or per day, above 36 or below 30, will be adjusted by arrangements with the employees in the departments or divisions affected.

5. Lay-off notices will be made in duplicate, one going to foremen and the other kept in the labor department office, open for inspection.

The Progressive Proposals Adopted by the Union Meeting

1. *Whereas*, the proposals of the Goodyear Company for settlement of the present strike do not clarify to any great extent the company's position on the issue that provoked the strike and do not furnish a firm and lasting basis for solution, and

Whereas, the striking Goodyear employees recognize at the same time that the company, by beginning negotiations, has taken a step towards the much desired settlement of the strike, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the negotiations committee be empowered to proceed as follows:

That point No. 1 of the company's proposal be accepted with the addition that seven days be the maximum time after settlement within which all employees be returned to their original jobs.

2. Clarification of clause 2 of the company's proposal, to set up definite grievance adjustment machinery through shop and department union committees and assurance of the right of the union to use its president (not an employee) in grievance dealings.

3. Clarification of clause 3 to include notification to union committees of wage adjustments.

4. Restoration of wage cuts and no further wage cuts or hour increases in the plant. A flat 36-hour week, six-hour day.

5. A policy of straight seniority throughout the plant, including flying squadron members as well as other employees.

6. Termination of company financial assistance to Goodyear Industrial Assembly.

When the strikers' meeting of over four thousand took place, the union leadership had already been advised as to the procedure of the rank and file. Realizing that to come forward and urge acceptance of the company's peace proposals, as they were definitely in-

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clined to do, would put them "on the spot" once more with the union membership, they again abdicated leadership by merely reading the proposals and telling the membership they (the leadership) had no recommendations. It was at this point that the rank-and-file proposals were introduced and overwhelmingly accepted. This strike strategy at this point made it possible to squeeze out of the company during the next week the settlement finally acceped.

LESSONS OF THE GOODYEAR STRIKE

The Goodyear strike offers many lessons in strike strategy which are of importance, not only to the rubber workers, but to all workers, especially those in the basic industries. Akron is not only "strike area No. 1" of Ohio; the conduct of this strike shows that with proper strategy, strikes can be won even against such a powerful trust as that in the rubber industry, which, like all the other trusts, is closely tied up with Wall Street.

Here we see not only a successful strike against monopoly capital; we see not only the building of the union; but the entire labor movement, through the Central Labor Union, is drawing the political lessons of the strike. This was seen during the first week after the settlement of the strike in the adoption of a resolution by the Akron C.L.U. in favor of a Farmer-Labor Party on a county, Congressional, and state scale, and in the setting up of a Committee of 23 to proceed to take the necessary next steps. What are the lessons which must be drawn from this great strike struggle?

1. *The role of partial demands.* In the Seventh World Congress resolutions, we find the following:

> "The defense of the immediate economic and political interests of the working class must be the starting point and form the main content of the workers' united front in all capitalist countries."

The Akron Goodyear strike started over such small economic demands. The issue was whether a section of the men should be laid off or whether all should be employed with a dividing of the work. Aside from solidarity, the workers also had in mind the fact that, once laid off, those remaining would be speeded up to do the work of all previously employed. Here we see clearly how alertness to the most burning economic grievances of the workers is the point of departure for unionization and struggle. From such a department economic grievance grew this great strike of 14,000 workers with all its experiences and political implications.

2. *The militancy and alertness of the rank and file won the strike, despite waverings of leadership.* The strike was won only by the militancy of an organized minority of the strikers who manned

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the picket line, plus the united support of the Akron labor movement, including the support on the picket line by employed and W.P.A. workers, the general strike action initiated by the Central Labor Union which was supported by a majority of the local unions, and the active participation of the Communist Party. It would be wrong to characterize the leaders of the International or of the Goodyear local as reactionaries. They were a group of men that included supporters, although in a confused way, of general progressive policies in the past. They lacked experience and, most of all, a class understanding. For the most part lacking strike and union experience and being without a class understanding, they actually appeared panic-stricken at every new stage of development. Instead of working out their strategy in full consultation with the rank and file and organizing a broad strike committee, which could then have combined aggressive leadership with the maximum of strength, enthusiasm, and initiative from below, they expressed lack of confidence in the rank and file throughout the entire strike, and at every critical stage of the strike became panic-stricken.

It was only the determination of those on the picket line, among whom the Communists were an active force, and the influence, counsel, and pressure of the other rubber industry locals and the Central Labor Union leadership, which gave these Goodyear and International Executive Board leaders the necessary push forward. Whenever this pressure was released they were ready to give up.

One important strike tactic which the Communists suggested was never accepted. This was because we could not even convince the militant strikers of its importance and therefore could not bring the necessary pressure upon the leadership. Before dealing with this tactic, it is important to note that each time the company opened negotiations it did so only after a demonstration of organized strength of the strikers and the Akron labor movement. The Goodyear Company opened its first negotiations after the general strike threat of the Central Labor Union; the second negotiations, after the rejection of the McGrady proposals; and the third negotiations, after the Armory meeting at which the strikers rejected the company proposals and substituted new ones. Here was a clear lesson that organized action and tactics of offensive are bound to bring results. It was our contention that side by side with the opening of negotiations must go additional tactics of offensive, such as spreading the strike to the Goodyear plants in California and Maryland, which were ready for strike; placing all Goodyear products on the "unfair list", not only in Akron, but throughout the country; etc. We knew that this would have speeded up the settlement. The arguments raised against such tactics of offensive were that "it would embarrass

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the company", "it would give business to Goodyear's competitors and thus hurt the business of the company, making it more difficult for the men in the future", etc. Those who advanced these arguments failed to see precisely what it was that had forced the company to enter into negotiations; and further, that if they worried about the business of the company, they should never have called the strike. That the Goodyear Company realized the importance of tactics of offensive even during negotiations, was revealed by its coming out on the radio and trying to stampede the men back to work; by its organizing of the vigilante "Security League", and by its asking for an extension of the injunction even during the negotiations.

3. *To know exactly when to finish a strike.* Good strike leadership necessitates a full and rounded out knowledge of the relationship of forces as well as keeping the class interests of the strikers and union above everything else. Because of the inexperience of the union leadership and their expressed lack of confidence in the rank and file, they never believed the strike could last five weeks. They were ready at all times to settle the strike. We, Communists, on the other hand, by proper evaluation of the relationship of forces, the conduct of the strike, and the support of the rest of the labor movement, took a very sharp attitude toward all the previous settlement proposals which gave absolutely no concessions to the workers, gave no guarantee for employing everyone, and would have resulted only in widespread discriminaion against union leaders and activists and would have brought, for the third time in two years, bitter disgust and demoralization amongst the men. Proper strike tactics, as explained above, finally forced the company, in the fifth week, to offer a settlement that gave certain guarantees and concessions to the men. At such a moment, because it was wrong to measure the morale of all the men, especially those who were passive and belonged to neither the real union nor the company union, by the militancy of the picket line, we advised, urged, and helped convince the strikers to accept the settlement.

At this moment, in the fifth week of the strike, the counter-revolutionary sect of Trotskyites appeared on the scene. A few hours before the final settlement they distributed a leaflet, unsigned (were they ashamed of it or were they already within the Socialist Party, but conducting organized factionalism even within it?), which, disguised in radical phraseology, called for rejection of the proposed agreement; for holding out until the strikers got a signed agreement and the abolition of the company union, for kicking out the union leaders and howling them down the next day by singing the song, "No, No, a Thousand Times No!". A more irresponsible piece of printed matter could not have been issued. Those responsible for the

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leaflet were trying to play upon the splendid sentiments of the picket line, but what they advocated had absolutely nothing to do with the realities of the situation. Furthermore, they were counting, by not signing the leaflet, on making the Communists bear the responsibility for it. At the final meeting, Vice-President Burns did try to attribute this leaflet to both the Communists and the Workers' Party. There was such a protest from the strikers that Burns made statements later to the strikers, to a delegation of the Communist Party, and to the public through the press, apologizing to the Communist Party for attributing the leaflet to us, while making clear his disagreements with Communist understanding and ideology.

4. *Building the Union through struggle.* In contrast to other strike situations in the rubber industry in Akron, during which the men joined the unions by the thousands only to become disgusted later when their demands were relegated to the "integrity" of some Labor Board or arbitration committee, all the rubber unions became stronger in the course of this strike. During the five weeks of the strike the three largest rubber union locals grew as follows: Goodyear, more than 3,000 new members, with additional hundreds still joining since the strike settlement; Goodrich, more than 5,000 new members; Firestone, nearly 3,000 new members. It is clear that the most effective way of building the trade unions is in the course of struggle. The strike also brought to the forefront a series of new union leaders from among the ranks of the membership. Those loyal unionists who manned that picket line, who were the "captains" and "generals" of the picket line—the backbone of the strike—have developed from their midst a whole number of potential leaders, not only of the Goodyear Local, but of the entire Rubber Workers International.

The strike also answers those "Left" skeptics, including the few in the ranks of our own Party who deep down in their hearts never fully agreed that the Party analysis was correct, that the rubber workers, given proper leadership, would rapidly join the American Federation of Labor union and make their joining one of the standard bearers of progressive policies within the A. F. of L.

5. *The question of Negroes, the women folk, and relief.* It is necessary also to call attention to some other weaknesses in the course of the strike. While the number of Negro workers in Goodyear is negligible, it was, nevertheless, very important to involve even these few in the strike and in the strike leadership. This was the elementary class duty of all unionists. It furthermore would have had great significance for the few thousands of Negro workers who are employed in the Firestone plant, but who are mostly unorganized. The result of this lack of understanding was that no Negro work-

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ers, except a few Negro Communists and some leaders of the W.P. A. union, were to be found on the picket line.

Insufficient steps, also, were taken to mobilize the women folk of the strikers. While a handful worked loyally in the pickets' kitchen, day and night, the masses of the women folk were not involved. This resulted in the "forcing back home" of these women who did not thoroughly understand the issues and importance of the strike. They were easily susceptible to the suave propaganda of the radio broadcasts and newspapers. As the strike went on and economic difficulties increased, this became a force, which, if not properly handled, might have turned the tide. This, indeed, was one of the factors that made it necessary to settle the strike at that given moment.

While the union organized, in its limited way, a good functioning relief committee which did some excellent work, the entire question of relief was, nevertheless, not handled on a broad enough scale. No general appeal was sent out to all surrounding local unions and Central Labor Unions to pour in financial support. It was mistakenly believed that to make such an appeal would have been "a sign of weakness". These are three weaknesses which must be noted and understood for future experiences.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE FOR INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION

No evaluation of the Goodyear strike would be complete without mention of the role of the Committee for Industrial Organization and its representatives. We can say that in this strike, as in the U.M. W.A. Convention, that where the C.I.O. representatives separated themselves from the policies of the Executive Council Old Guard, they adopted a progressive role and that where they clung to the policies and practices of the Executive Council, they were a negative influence. Insofar as the C.I.O. representatives counseled mass picketing, solidarity, no raising of the red scare, etc., they were a progressive force. Where they reflected a lack of confidence in the ability of the strikers to hold out because of their inexperience, and therefore were ready to settle the strike at inopportune moments; where they allowed the political tie-up of Lewis, Hillman, and Dubinsky with Roosevelt to influence them to make recommendations or to keep silent when McGrady tried to smash the strike, there they were still bringing in policies of the Old Guard.

While we must distinguish between the leadership of the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. Executive Council Old Guard, we must also see clearly that advocacy of industrial unionism alone, without giving the industrial union structure a class struggle content, is insufficient. It was also a weakness of the C.I.O. as a whole, that it did not im-

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mediately utilize the tremendous enthusiasm developed among the steel and auto workers as a result of the Goodyear victory, to press forward aggressively with organization drives in these two important industries. The workers in the steel and auto industries are already putting the question to the C.I.O., "Why don't you stop talking organization, and begin doing some organization work?"

THE ROLE OF THE PARTY AND WEAKNESSES IN PARTY PARTICIPATION

Without adopting an attitude of boastfulness or neglecting to see our glaring shortcomings, we can correctly say that the Communist Party played a decisive role in the strike and that without our participation, despite the handicaps we were laboring under, the strike would not have been victorious. At each of the critical stages of the strike we see that it was the Party position that was correct and successful. The Party leadership showed itself alert to all phases of the strike and worked out the correct strategy and political conclusions during and after the strike.

Moreover, in contrast to the Socialist Party, whose local organization took absolutely no part in the strike, but which had its National Chairman and one other National Executive Committee member among the C.I.O. organizers during the entire strike, we had to work without a single Party member in the upper councils of the strike. But the Party established ties with a core of active members and leaders of the picket line. How was this possible? Through our general activity, we won influence among the progressive leadership of other rubber workers' locals and within the Central Labor Union itself. Through all these connections, our Party operated as an organized body, and while, at certain moments, our influence at one or another front was momentarily decisive, the most decisive factor at all times was the connection which grew between our Party and an active group of the militants on the picket line. There was no mere handing down of decisions from on top, but daily meetings and discussions which made the Party line clear. We thus transmitted the Party line through these strikers, through the progressive sector of the organized labor movement, into a power, which made our influence important.

For the first time in any big strike struggle, the Party made some use of the radio as an instrument of agitation to reach the mass of the working people. Three times during the strike the Party's message was heard over the air officially in the name of the Communist Party.

Efforts were also carried through, although far from satisfactorily, to mobilize non-trade union forces in support of the

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strike. As a result of Party activity, the W.P.A. Union issued leaflets supporting the strike and actively participated in the picket line. A representative broad conference of all Hungarian mass organizations was organized, which pledged support to the strike. Special mass meetings of the International Workers Order were organized at which leaders of the Goodyear local and the Central Labor Union spoke.

It would be a grave error to fail to see some of our glaring shortcomings. While the Section leadership participated actively and decisively in shaping the outcome of the strike, the bulk of the Party membership were not so actively involved. The street units did not rise to the occasion. They did not undertake, either as a result of directives or on their own initiative, to arouse the neighborhood population in support of the strike, to collect relief, to sell literature, to organize house or hall meetings when the Party radio talks were on. In some respects the isolation of the members of the street units was so great, that they were less aroused than the average rubber worker about the strike situation and all its implications. Secondly, while the Party made good use of the radio, other forms of agitation were weak. While in the first week of the strike some leaflets were issued, which the union leadership objected to being distributed on the picket line, we did not find other forms of distribution, but tended to give up this independent mobilization of the masses in our own name. Here we should have undertaken widespread distribution of our message in all the workers' neighborhoods, utilizing the street unit members. While some special editions of the shop papers were issued, these were not issued regularly enough and had an unsatisfactory distribution. The greatest weakness in our agitation was the very poor distribution of the *Daily Worker* among the Goodyear strikers. While the Party's influence was decisively felt in the strike, tendencies existed, due to an unsatisfactory mobilization of all the Party forces and poor political development of the Party membership, not to bring forward the Party's agitation boldly enough.

While the Party has recruited some ten active picket leaders from among the Goodyear strikers into its existing Goodyear shop branch, it is obvious that with an army of 2,000-3,000 active fighting strikers and the influence that our Party played, this is no substantial recruiting. There is every reason to believe that we should have a Party that includes at least 50 new Goodyear members in the Communist Party shop branch in Goodyear. Similarly in the other shops. While the unions have understood how to recruit thousands from the Firestone and Goodrich plants our Party shop branches there are lagging woefully behind in increasing their ranks from among the heroic fighters of Firestone, Goodrich, General, and Mohawk. If

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we do not build the Party in this situation, then there is no real guarantee that the unions can consolidate their growth and influence, and that Akron can become a 100 per cent union town.

Because of the situation as regards the Party membership and leadership mentioned above, we were not able to connect up the work in the Goodyear situation with the other strike developments which were taking place in the Akron area under the stimulus of the Goodyear strike. Furthermore, we must emphasize that only in the last three weeks of the strike did the State Committee devote its major time to assisting the Party County Committee. The rest of the Party throughout the State did not mobilize the local labor movement sufficiently in support of the Akron strike.

CONCLUSION, AND TASKS OF THE PARTY

Our entire Party and, through it, the working class of Akron and the surrounding territory, must draw all the necessary lessons from this great strike battle. The following are the tasks of the Party, stated briefly and without elaboration:

1. The vigilance of the picket line must be transferred into the factory, to see that the agreement is lived up to; the question of wages and other economic grievances of the men must be settled in the interests of the Goodyear workers. There must be solid union organization in the departments and no resting upon the laurels of victory.

2. The union in all other rubber plants must press forward for the same conditions as those in Goodyear, wherever there are any inequalities. They must also consolidate their union strength in the departments and be ever vigilant and alert in protecting the interests of the men as a whole.

3. Every local union and the entire International must be made conscious of the fact that to meet the new threatened offensive of the company—of decentralizing the rubber industry—they must conduct an energetic organizing drive in every other rubber plant in the U.S.A. The first move to build new plants by the companies must be countered by the immediate unionization of that plant.

4. The Party must undertake effective measures to make its evaluation of the strike known to every rubber worker as well as to the workers in the auto and steel industries.

5. Already now, the Party and, through it, all progressive forces, must begin preparing for the local union elections and the International convention in September. All the lessons of this strike must be taken into this convention. The leadership must be strengthened by adding to it the best fighters among the progressives, including the Communists. Already now, the union members must begin to plan

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to make their convention the answer to all the latest maneuvers and threats of the rubber companies. The maximum number of fighters —progressives and Communists—must be elected as delegates.

6. The steps initiated by the Akron Central Labor Union for local Labor Party action must be pressed forward energetically against all those who are trying to counsel delay and inactivity, which includes the Socialists. Akron must not only be the center of militant strike struggles and victories; it must become the first industrial center in Ohio to send a Labor Party Congressman to Washington.

7. The May 3 Labor Parade organized by the Akron Central Labor Union must be utilized, not only to show the strength of Akron organized labor, but to bring to the Akron rubber workers a fuller understanding of international solidarity and the need of a class struggle line on all questions.

8. A recognition on the part of our Party, that all the very good work we have done will have been like building on sand, unless we really carry through an energetic recruiting drive, to make our Party in Akron a real Party of rubber workers.

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Problems in Our Farmer-Labor Party Activities

By C. A. HATHAWAY

THE struggle for the realization of a broad, militant Farmer-Labor Party—and it is a struggle!—is going on in a most complex political situation. New political forces are emerging, having most varied political programs and organizational forms and connections; some expressing themselves as opposition movements within the old Parties; others, outwardly at least, as independent groups. Struggles and re-groupings are taking place in virtually all of the older political organizations, Socialist and Farmer-Labor, as well as Republican and Democratic. There is more political discussion and activity than at any time since the crisis broke, seven years ago. All this, directly or indirectly, reflects the spirit of discontent widely prevalent among the masses of the people. It reflects the pressure of the people's demand for fundamental economic and political changes.

To us, the Communists, this mass political interest and activity affords an unprecedented opportunity to grow and extend our influence. It offers us the opportunity to become a Party of the broad masses, influencing decisively political events in the entire nation. But in this situation we are also confronted with tremendous difficulties. The workers and farmers, many of whom are showing interest in political events for the first time, are raw and politically inexperienced; they can be, and are being confused and misled by reactionaries, demagogues, and reformists. Our successes, therefore, are dependent first, on our ability to throw all our forces and energies among the masses, working with them, learning their immediate desires and needs, and, secondly, on our ability to combat the policies and practices of the misleaders of all shades, to tear the masses away from their influence, and to organize and lead them onto the road of victorious mass struggle for their immediate economic and political interests, and against political reaction, fascism and war.

It is with such a picture before us that we must approach the problem of realizing a truly broad, fighting, mass Farmer-Labor Party. The struggle for such a Party, inseparably bound up with our day-to-day struggles in the factories, unions, and neighborhoods for the united front in defense of the workers' needs and rights, can be most effective in exposing the anti-working class character

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of many of those who pose as "workers' leaders" or as "friends of the people". It can result in a lasting coalition of workers, farmers, and middle class people in a Party devoted to the defense of the people's interests—economic betterment, democracy, and peace. It can serve as a powerful barrier against fascism and war.

Our first and biggest job to achieve this aim is finally and completely to wipe out self-satisfied sectarianism from our own ranks. It is true that the last period has seen advances in most Party Districts on this score. But there is not a District—*not one*—which can claim to have eliminated this disease. It is still everywhere the greatest barrier to success in our efforts to achieve a broad proletarian united front, and a Farmer-Labor Party. We are still too formal in our approach, too rigid in our ways; we are not yet at home in the broad movements, political and economic, which are stirring the masses. We are impatient with the workers because they do not immediately see things as we do.

How far, for example, have we advanced in influencing the followers of Upton Sinclair's Epic movement, of Townsend, of Coughlin? Certainly, these movements, demagogic as are their leaders, represent the resentment and discontent of many thousands of toilers and middle-class people. Have we taken full advantage of new currents and groupings in the Socialist Party and the American Federation of Labor? Certainly, in but few Districts if in any. Our too slow progress in these and similar movements arises from a sectarian indifference to their existence and from a resistance to serious, sustained work within and around these movements. We have not really pressed our policy there of a united front of struggle for social insurance, for old-age pensions, for the shorter work day, etc., which the followers of these movements desire.

But while carrying on a persistent struggle to do away with this most serious obstacle to our mass work and to the furthering of a Farmer-Labor Party, *sectarianism*, we must be on our guard also against *Right opportunism*. We must recognize that the very overcoming of our isolation from the masses, brought on by our past and still existing sectarianism, brings with it an increasing danger of Right opportunism. First we resist going among the masses, and then, when we do go, we tend to forget why we are there; we tend to forget we are there as *Communists*, with *Communist objectives*. That is a danger.

SOME GLARING INSTANCES OF RIGHT OPPORTUNISM

I wish to deal with some examples of Right opportunism which have recently come to my attention. Most of the examples come from the Middle West, but I am sure that comrades in other

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Districts will see in these examples some counter-parts of opportunist errors closer home. Certainly, they should serve to place the entire Party on guard against the danger of opportunistic practices as we push forward more aggressively with our mass work.

In one District our comrades have been thoroughly isolated from broader mass movements; our membership there has been, until recently, almost entirely foreign-born. Our work and influence in the past have been exclusively among the workers in this one language group. Recently, our comrades have made a determined effort to change this situation. They have recruited a number of new members, including a number of native American workers. They have penetrated some of the local unions and other workers' groups. One can say that these comrades have made a good beginning in overcoming their past sectarianism, their past narrow field of work.

But, as our comrades there came in contact with workers outside our own narrow circles, they found that these workers whom they reached were under the influence of the local Democratic Party organization. Not a surprising fact when one considers our past work! Furthermore, they were not immediately ready to change their views. Also not surprising! Our comrades correctly proposed a Farmer-Labor Party as an alternative. The workers (more particularly some of the leaders!) proposed to remain in the Democratic Party. Our comrades, sincerely desiring to remain with the workers, decided there was only one thing to do: Support the local Democratic candidates, which, they reasoned, echoing those whom they had contacted, "was controlled by the workers there anyway". This is an example of Right opportunism, not limited incidentally to this one locality, which, instead of serving to break the workers away from the old capitalist parties, can only bind them more firmly to them. Such practices build up illusions of progressiveness around these parties which can only benefit Roosevelt and the Liberty Leaguers.

What should our comrades have done? Was it correct to go to these workers?—and stay with them when we found out their views? Most certainly. But it was wrong to be limited by their incorrect conceptions. It was wrong to propose that we become Democrats along with them. We should have patiently and persistently explained the role of the Democratic Party, locally, on a state scale, and nationally, explaining its stand on all the questions of most vital concern to the workers, exposing its consistent support of capitalist interests. Moreover, on a local or county scale, we should have carried through such actions as would have proved the anti-working class character of the Democratic Party and of its leaders locally. Surely, there, as in all places, relief is inadequate,

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discrimination is practised in relief, non-union wages are paid on W.P.A. jobs, etc. Could we not have organized united front committees on the jobs, or at relief stations, or in the unions, and led them to local, county and even state officials, or to Democratic Party leaders, demanding that they take up the fight? Could we not have made such actions, carried on persistently, the basis for a sustained campaign for a Farmer-Labor Party, for a genuine party of workers and farmers? Of course we could, comrades. To develop such struggles, and to build such a militant party, could be our only reasons for breaking down our sectarianism and for going among the workers. It was as well to remain isolated as to adopt the course proposed. So much for that example.

A LESSON TO BE LEARNED FROM AN EXPERIENCE IN MILWAUKEE

In another District (Milwaukee) our comrades were confronted with the necessity of determining their stand in the municipal elections. The Socialist Party, as is well known, is the dominant Party in that city. It had refused all overtures which the Communist Party had made for united front activities. Mayor Hoan and other local leaders were viciously anti-Communist. Even before the primary elections it was clear that a concentration of reactionary forces was taking place in preparation for a determined drive to defeat the Socialist administration. Our comrades correctly saw the necessity of avoiding any election policy which would play into the hands of the reactionaries. They also knew that in Reading, Pennsylvania, the Central Committee had instructed our local organization not to run candidates for city-wide offices, but to support the Socialist candidates. Our comrades adopted the same policy for Milwaukee. But, with the best of intentions, our comrades did not choose the best policy. In their zeal to demonstrate their desire for the united front, even with people who did not want it and who denounced our support, our comrades failed to consider the difference in the elections laws in Milwaukee as compared with those in Reading, as well as several other factors. In the case of Reading there was no primary election preceding the general election. To have nominated our candidates would have split the Socialist vote and possibly contributed to the election of a reactionary regime. Furthermore, our Party was extremely weak, both in numbers and influence. In Milwaukee our Party was relatively strong; we had influence in a number of the trade unions and unemployed bodies; there was a militant group in the Socialist Party fighting for a united front of Socialists and Communists; and, above all, there existed the primary election system which would have enabled us to put up our own

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candidates in the primary contest without in any way playing into the hands of the reactionaries. I think our comrades would now agree that an energetic primary election campaign, with a full list of Communist candidates, was the advisable thing. Through such a campaign all differences in principle between ourselves and the Socialists could have been discussed, as well as the Socialist leaders' opposition to the much needed united front. With the support of the united front advocates among the Socialists, such a campaign might well have served to arouse sufficient mass pressure to force the Socialist Party leadership to establish united front relations for the final election. If our candidates were eliminated in the primaries, we could then have supported the Socialists against the reactionaries in the finals. That would have been the correct policy. The policy followed marks a tendency to throw our support too hastily and uncritically to the Socialist Party, thinking that by doing so the Socialists will learn to like us and conclude a united front. But such methods will not work. The Socialist leaders, particularly of the Hoan type, will agree to a united front only when they are forced into it by the masses who refuse to remain divided.

ERRORS COMMITTED IN MINNESOTA AND NORTH DAKOTA

In Minnesota and North Dakota still other and more serious opportunist tendencies found expression. In Minnesota a Farmer-Labor Party has been in existence for many years; it has been the dominant state party for about four years, and has ruled Minneapolis and St. Paul for intermittant periods. In North Dakota, state power is in the hands of the Non-Partisan League—a political organization composed principally of farmers, but containing also workers and small business people. The Non-Partisan League captured control of the Republican Party machinery in 1918, and has since then held power more or less continuously. Undoubtedly, both the Minnesota and the North Dakota movements, *in their composition*, are made up chiefly of workers and farmers. But, in their policies and practices, they have demonstrated over many years and in many situations, that they have wandered far from the road of a real, militant people's movement. Starting out in the days of the World War, they first reflected the mass militancy of the period. But as they went along and gained election successes, these two movements passed into the hands of office holders and political appointees; they made alliances, both within their state and nationally, with the old parties; they supported Roosevelt for the presidency, and even centered their state campaigns in 1932, and again in 1934, around Roosevelt's "New Deal" program. Their policies were so unsatisfactory to the masses that in both cases, in North Dakota and

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in Minnesota, mass revolts developed within these movements, even reaching the point of mass demands for the expulsion of leaders.

Our Party, under the circumstances of a growing and vigorous Left wing, which influenced the course of the Party itself, correctly authorized our organizations in these Districts, already more than a year ago, to give attention to this growing Left movement, to organize it, and with it to work for the transformation of both the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party and the North Dakota Non-Partisan League into genuine Farmer-Labor Parties which would fight militantly for the needs of the workers and farmers, and against political reaction—both inside and outside these parties.

That this policy was correct has been proved by the growth of our Party in Minnesota, by the consolidation of a strong Left movement there, and by its influence on the Party as a whole. In North Dakota, the results have not been so far-reaching, because our Party is weaker there, and has not been able to carry through the policy so effectively. In Minnesota, as evidence of our comrades' success, there were some forty Communist Party delegates representing trade unions and cooperatives seated as delegates in the recent Farmer-Labor Party Convention. There was a bloc of at least 100 delegates that firmly adhered to a Left position on all questions of principle.

But despite these successes, our comrades in Minnesota made serious Right opportunist errors. As they participated more fully in the broad mass movement, evidencing in this the breaking down of the old deadening sectarianism, they substituted for this sectarianism a Right opportunism which in the long run would have ben equally costly.

First, our comrades were guilty of a most opportunistic approach to Party history. Their attitude to our past criticism of the Farmer-Labor Party was at all times apologetic. They believed our past line was wrong, and that only now was our line correct. This reflected itself quite directly in our own inner-Party life, and, in a less clear form, also in public documents (leaflets, *united action*, etc.). Our comrades conveniently forgot the very recent alliance of Governor Olsen with the Democratic Party; his uncritical support of the "New Deal" (N.R.A., A.A.A. etc.); and, above all, his role in the first General Drivers' Strike and again in the second strike, when union headquarters were raided, strike leaders placed in a military stockade, etc. Certainly, Communists quite correctly oppose, and vigorously, those responsible for such actions. Finally, our comrades failed to realize that those changes which have taken place in the Farmer-Labor Party are the direct result of the mass revolt against those former policies, and that our sharp and justified criticisms in the

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past played no small part in the crystallization of this Left opposition. No, comrades, our general Party line was correct, although in Minnesota, as elsewhere, that line was distorted by our deep-grained sectarianism—a disease from which the Minnesota District still suffers. To think and act otherwise is to hamper the Party in winning the workers.

Secondly, the policy of struggle to transform the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party into a truly anti-reactionary party, fighting aggressively for the people's interests and rights, was shelved; instead, the conception grew up that the existing party was already the people's front; the simple slogan was put forward: *Build the Farmer-Labor Party*, and our comrades gave it and its leaders (with the exception of Mayor Latimer!) virtually uncritical support. This wholly incorrect position was even more crassly expressed by our comrades in North Dakota with regard to the Non-Partisan League, which operates as the Republican Party there.

Thirdly, the independent role of our Party was abandoned to such a degree that our comrades found it possible several weeks before the State Convention of the Farmer-Labor Party to issue a statement for mass circulation declaring our intention to support without reservation the Farmer-Labor Party and its candidates in the elections. They did not wait to see what the convention would do, what kind of platform it would adopt, who its candidates would be, what stand it would take on old Party alliances, etc. Continuing from this error, they virtually became organizers of support for Governor Olsen and Senator Benson for the convention nomination before there was evidence as to the stand these men would take on any question.

In North Dakota the same line was carried so far as to lead to the endorsement of the Non-Partisan League, with even less justification than the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party, and of its candidate for Governor, Langer, whose record and program certainly warranted no support.

Fortunately, all those most serious errors have been discussed since with our Minnesota and North Dakota Party as a whole and corrected. But the fact that they could go so far, creating the danger not merely of a number of isolated opportunistic mistakes, but of an opportunistic line, indicates the care that must be employed to avoid such dangers.

Our comrades throughout the country, confronted likewise with different situations, can well learn from these mistakes.

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The Hand of God—and the Lack of Flood Control

By N. SPARKS

I. THE CLASS IMPACT OF THE DISASTER

THE Pittsburgh Flood was one of the greatest disasters ever suffered by the people of Western Pennsylvania. In the last serious flood, in 1907, the rivers at the "Point" (where the Allegheny and Monongahela join to form the Ohio) reached a height of 34 feet. Only once before in recorded history did they go over 40 feet—41 feet in 1763. This year they went over 46 feet.

In Allegheny County alone 62 people are dead and 41 missing. Hundreds have been injured and stricken by exposure. At least 80,000 people were turned out of their homes by the flood and many of these homes were destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. The damage has been estimated at $250,000,000. But such figures give no true picture of the devastation. A repair job in a downtown building can be estimated at thousands of dollars, while the entire effects on a score of working class families reach no such figure. The communities hit hardest were, of course, the little working class towns that lie along the river—Apollo, on the Kiski; Tarentum, Oakmont, Sharpsburg, and Etna on the Allegheny; the Lawrenceville and Manchester districts of Pittburgh; Braddock and Homestead on the Monongahela, and McKees Rocks on the Ohio. Sixty miles to the east, the industrial city of Johnstown in the low-lying valley of the Conemaugh, was completely flooded out. Twenty-four lives were lost, 11,000 families were rendered homeless, and $27,000,000 damage done in and around Johnstown alone.

Much is being said about the terrific losses of business and industry. Was not the Golden Triangle under water? But the truth of the matter is that almost the whole crushing burden of loss fell upon the workers, farmers, and small businessmen. Nor could it be otherwise. The capitalists teach that Nature strikes impartially on rich and poor alike. But *under a class system*, the ruling class sees to it that it is the oppressed class *that lives in the probable path of natural diasters*,—in this case, along the low-lying banks of the rivers—while the well-to-do live in the safe areas—the hilly sections —immune from floods.

The *Pittsburgh Business Review* reports 19,073 dwellings, which

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previously housed 79,044 people, directly affected by the flood in Allegheny County alone. In the city of Pittsburgh 26,439 people lived in the 3,858 houses that were affected by the flood; of these houses 1,067 were previously *in need of major repairs*, and 686 were *totally unfit for habitation*. "It will be noted", says the *Review*, "that a large proportion of the buildings affected were found in February, 1934, to be in need of major repairs or entirely unfit for use. The areas flooded were generally composed of industrial or commercial properties *or low rent dwellings*."

In addition, the toiling classes are more vulnerable to disaster. The rich, for the most part, do not have their property in the form of tangible effects that can be swept away by a flood. The steel mills, after a few days' clean-up, are again going full blast. Nor can one get much excited about the destruction of a few hundred carloads of foodstuffs of the produce trusts, since it was these same people who only a short time ago were busily destroying food on their own accord in order to keep up the prices. But the workers have lost lives, homes, all household and personal belongings, and in some cases jobs. The farmers have lost livestock, their year's crop, and in some cases the total value of their land. The small storekeepers have lost their whole stock, and in some cases are completely wiped out. Thus, the main impact of the disaster fell upon the toiling masses.

II. "AFTER ME, THE DELUGE"

> "The agrarian crisis, especially in the United States, has been sharply accentuated in this period . . . through the renewed drought and the soil erosion. The capitalist influence which has been degrading agriculture over a long period is now coming to a head as a result of the special circumstances of the crisis in the dust storms of the last weeks. *This must be explained as a phenomenon of capitalism, not a natural phenomenon.* That is exactly what they are. They are exactly of the same significance for America as the floods of China for that country. These disasters are the sign of the breaking down of man's established control of nature through the breaking down of the existing social, economic system." (Earl Browder: Report to the Central Committee Plenum, May, 1935.)

Western Pennsylvania is an outstanding example of the reckless destruction of the richest natural resources by capitalist development. The vast majority of the oil and natural gas in the great Appalachian field has been lost forever by the ruthless get-rich-quick methods of exploitation. Huge quantities of coal have been rendered forever inaccessible by the practice of "robbing" the mines—extracting the coal within easiest reach without any regard to long-time development. The slopes of the Allegheny Mountains have been almost entirely denuded of their natural forests. As a result—soil erosion.

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The fertile top soil has nothing to hold it, and is blown and washed away. The remaining land becomes more and more barren, riven by gullies, unable to absorb and hold the rainfall. Heavy rainfalls run off immediately, instead of gradually, into the rivers, making floods inevitable. Each flood brings more silt into the river beds, lessening the depth and width of the river and thus making the next flood worse.

The words of Comrade Browder in comparing the dust storms in our country to the floods in China apply with even more force to the floods in the United States. The most disastrous floods in the world today occur in the Yellow River basin in backward China and in the Ohio-Mississippi basin in developed America. In the case of China, man's control over nature breaks down because imperialism strangles the natural, technical, economic, and social development of the country. In America, capitalism, which has created the preconditions for floods, has also created the technique and resources by which the floods can be prevented. But the decaying social economic system, lagging behind the development of technique, not only cares nothing for works of conservation, maintenance, and safeguarding in which there is no immediate profit, but permits a handful of utility magnates actually to *block* the flood-control program for their own personal profit.

The technique of flood-control consists mainly in building an adequate number of dams and storage reservoirs, so that when the rivers begin flooding, the surplus water can be diverted into the storage reservoirs and released gradually when the danger is passed. In addition, this system maintains adequate water in the rivers in time of drought, to provide for navigation, water supply, and disposal of sewage. Best of all, hundreds of thousands of kilowatts of cheap hydroelectric power become immediately available. But in this benefit lies the doom of the whole project.

Immediately after the last serious flood in 1907, a Pittsburgh Flood Commission was organized to see "that this disaster shall never happen again". In 1911 the Engineering Commission made its report, recommending 17 dams and reservoirs. The report was approved widely by the War Department among others. But in 1912, Congress decided again to investigate flood control in the tri-state area. In 1915, it decided to investigate, and in 1924 it again decided to investigate. In 1925 it passed an act to investigate, and in 1933 the F. E. R. A. investigated.

What lies back of this blocking of flood control for 29 years—these futile investigations and pigeonholing of the reports, when the whole project has been fully worked out and prepared? The *Pittsburgh Business Review* ascribes it to "inertia and apathy". But

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it is common knowledge in Pittsburgh that Mellon, who has a monopoly of the public utilities, simply does not choose to permit the U. S. Government to carry out flood control projects, granting even that the Government was intent on carrying them out, which could create cheap hydroelectric power and threaten his control of electricity and the market for his coal and gas. Not only is this common knowledge, but the charge *that the utilities are responsible for the flood* was made openly by the head of the Red Cross in a radio speech, and not a single word has yet been said by anyone from the utilities or by any newspaper in denial of the accusation. The flood was no "Act of God". It was a literal instance of the policy of all decaying social systems: "After me, the deluge!"

III. CLASS RELATIONS

As the waters rose, the city became completely paralyzed. The downtown business district—the famous "Golden Triangle" between the two rivers—was inaccessible, with as much as 14 feet of water in some streets. The main power plant, on Brunot's Island in the Ohio River, was flooded, and all light and power failed throughout the city. As a result, all street car transportation stopped. All telephones went dead. All radio stations went out of action, except one that had remote power; but all radio receivers were dead anyway, except automobile radios. Gasoline shortage sent automobiles scurrying home as gasoline stations were unable to operate their electric pumps. Not a printing plant in the city could operate, and for a day there were no newspapers until the publishers could arrange out-of-town printing. The city was cut into sections as the water rose over the approaches to all bridges, and it was almost completely cut off from the outside world as railway tracks and roads were washed out in numerous places. The main waterpumping station stopped and sections of the city were without water.

Had half such a complete paralysis occurred as a result of a general strike, the bourgeoisie would have been howling for blood. Everyone will remember the outraged howls that went up during the Seattle and San Francisco General Strikes about "no milk for the babies", "no lights for the hospitals", "no gas for the ambulances", etc. Everyone will remember the vigilante bands rallying around these war-cries, and the growing series of concessions made by the union leaders before such slogans. But when all this occurs as a result, not of the class struggle, but of the bourgeoisie's own inefficiency, then there is utter complacency about the babies and the hospitals. With lives in danger from the rising waters, with boats and rescue equipment few and far between, with the possible dangers of food shortage and epidemic, the first act of the liberal

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"humanitarian" Governor Earle was to send in the National Guard.

The National Guard took their stand around the Golden Triangle as the waters receded. Theoretically, they were there to prevent "looting". Actually they were there to enforce class rule. In every catastrophe, the bourgeoisie howls to high heaven over the danger of "looting". Scant attention is paid to the loss of life, but "looting" is mentioned with such a combination of hysterical rage and dread which shows that this term represents to the capitalists something far more than the mere taking of goods. It is their synonym for the initiative of the masses.

All catastrophes temporarily strip away the thin veneer that covers over the class struggle, and sharpen the class alignments. The capitalists understand this very well, and therefore the troops precede the Red Cross—relief to the working class sufferers, but offered on the point of a bayonet!

The danger of the natural initiative of the masses—when their homes are swept away—to look for shelter in the unoccupied homes of the absentee rich; when their sources of food are gone, to take food where they find it; it was to prevent this that Governor Earle sent in the troops.

The reporter of the *Pittsburgh Press*, Gilbert Love, struck a mood that you might almost call lyrical over the arrival of the troops:

> "It's war-time in Pittsburgh.
>
> "Airplanes drone overhead, troops march through the streets, the booming sound of explosions roll over the city occasionally, and citizens watch the mounting casualty lists for the names of friends and relatives.
>
> "There is talk of 'canteens' and 'billets' and 'rations' and 'field headquarters'.
>
> "Uniforms are everywhere—the khaki of the National Guard, the gray of the State Police, the blue of the Coast Guard and Naval Reserves.
>
> "Red Cross flags flutter on trucks and autos, and Red Cross armbands are worn by thousands.
>
> "The most important men in the city meet the same reception as the idle sightseer when they come up against the line of militia.
>
> "The city is on a war-time diet. Fresh fruits and vegetables are scarce, and bakery bread and ground coffee hard to get in many sections. Staple foods are plentiful, however."

With military control, the bourgeoisie breathed more freely.

IV. THE WORK OF THE PARTY

The first necessity was to bring the voice of the Party to the masses, raising slogans that would indicate the lines along which they could best defend their class interests. The *Daily Worker* was, of

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course, cut off, and therefore the District leadership issued a *Pittsburgh Daily Worker*. Since no printing plants were running, this had to take the form of a four-page mimeographed folder which had to be gotten out by candle-light. In its statement, the Party called upon the city to throw open to the homeless all idle and unoccupied houses in decent condition, "especially those which are furnished, but whose owners are vacationing at present in Palm Beach"; it called for appropriations for human suffering before property repair—immediate adequate appropriations by city, state, and federal governments for flood relief; a People's Flood Relief Committee to be set up to handle all relief funds, made up of representatives of trade unions, workers' organizations, unemployed organizations, and the Communist and Socialist Parties; action against the profiteering which was already beginning, in view of the serious danger of a food shortage; if the shortage continues, rationing of the food supply of the rich; all repair work at union wages: no "emergency" mobilizations; and full compensation by federal and state governments for flood losses of workers, farmers, and small businessmen. This little *Daily Worker* was well received everywhere and its slogans raised many echoes among the masses, especially the slogan for full compensation, which has since become the central demand of the movement for flood relief. However, part of the slogan against profiteering — that which called for profiteering chain stores to be closed forever—was not well-advised, being more utopian than practical. It was not necessary to specify exactly the penalty for profiteering.

As for the actual work of the Party organization during the emergency, this was, unfortunately, very weak. Too many of the comrades naively came to the conclusion that the Party organization could not be expected to function in such an emergency, with the disruption of all links of transportation and communication. These comrades failed to understand that a Bolshevik Party should be at the very peak of its energy and effectiveness *precisely during emergency situations*. In many previous emergencies our Party organizations in various Districts and Sections have indeed risen to surprising heights—far above their normal capacities. In fact, the ability well-nigh to accomplish miracles in emergencies was pointed out more than once by Lenin as one of the outstanding characteristics of a Bolshevik Party.

Equally important in the long run is the ability of the Party to function at its very highest precisely when all communication is disrupted, when the normal life of the city and the operations of the bourgeois government are paralyzed or partly paralyzed.

The leadership of the Party, not only in general strikes, but

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in the proletarian revolution itself, will necessarily have to be carried on in exactly such conditions; and the fact that the Communist Party functions at its highest precisely when the enemy apparatus is paralyzed, is one of the tactical guarantees of our success. Inherent in this perspective is the Bolshevik plan of organization itself —a Party based upon shop nuclei, rooted among the masses in every neighborhood with *all units capable of displaying the highest initiative when thrown on their own resources*, seeing the class issues, raising the most burning slogans, and organizing the masses to carry them out.

But the weaknesses of the Party organization were not just organizational weaknesses. They resulted rather from a deep-going lack of political understanding, not only of the organizational tasks of the Party, but of the class issues involved. This tendency expressed itself mostly on the part of some comrades who slurred over all class lines. They saw the flood as a natural disaster, in which the "whole community" must aid in carrying on relief, and therefore they were anxious to see Communists placing themselves as individuals and brigades at the disposal of the Red Cross, Young Communist Leaguers helping the Boy Scouts, etc.

Of course, it would have been good for Communists to give organized direct help to sufferers; but these comrades failed to understand the Communists can only play a role as "part of the community" by first organizing their class for the defense of its class interests and, from this approach, play a part in the community as the spokesmen of the whole toiling people. Anything else means merely the liquidation of the Party in response to capitalist propaganda of "common emergency". Incidentally, this was further proved by the case of a number of comrades whose ordinary work naturally brought them into the Red Cross and other apparatus during the emergency, but who were useless to the Party because they also failed to see the class issues and failed to make contact with the Party leadership.

Widespread illusions existed also as to the character of the Red Cross. Many comrades failed to see that the call by the Red Cross for contributions to aid the flood-sufferers has exactly the aim of *preventing the people from getting these funds from the capitalist government.* And from whom did the contributions come? Precisely from those closest to the sufferers themselves—from the neighbors, the workers, local unions, etc. At its best, the Red Cross is nothing but a middleman taking funds from the workers to distribute among other workers and keeping a substantial percentage for its own apparatus. At its worst—that is, whenever necessary—there is no trick of capitalist oppression and scab-herding that it has not used.

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Yet the educational influence of our Party is still so weak in the district, that the Logan's Ferry local of the United Mine Workers turned over its whole treasury—some $900—to the Red Cross. The Curtisville Local gave about $500. Numerous other locals contributed. In Fayette County, where the memory of Red Cross scab-herding and denial of relief still rankles, the locals donated to the Salvation Army instead.

While we must recognize and applaud the deep feeling of proletarian solidarity and sympathy shown by such responses, we can only regret that the leadership of the labor movement failed to show their membership how they could be infinitely more useful to their class brothers by playing an independent role instead of helping the capitalist relief agencies. To the shame of the Pittsburgh Central Labor Union and District 5 of the U.M.W.A., it must be said that in no way did either of these organizations step forward and play the role that organized labor should play in such emergencies. Even in Allegheny Valley, where the Central Labor Union is headed by progressives, they were late in recognizing the value and importance of organized labor's stepping forward independently as the leader of the people, setting up a People's Relief and Administration Committee and organizing to make the necessary demands upon the government.

V. "FOR BIGGER AND BETTER FLOODS"

Hardly had the corpses of the flood victims been laid in their graves when the newspapers began coming out with big headlines in their usual style that the flood might well prove to be "a blessing in disguise".

> "Not since the World War has so frenzied a call for manpower and supplies been sounded here as clarioned through the city today as rebuilding work hit top speed", rejoiced the Scripps-Howard *Pittsburgh Press*.
>
> "Millions of dollars are to be spent throughout the flooded area in steel for railroads, bridges and highways; in glass for broken windows; in cement for new buildings, and for electrical equipment and other machinery."

On the financial page the paper decorously develops the theory of the value of disasters:

> "It is being said that the flood in the East may do for the heavy industries what the drought in the West did for agriculture: give it a push for recovery . . . the flood has no noticeable effect on supplies and manufactured goods or their prices, but it might be an incentive to a good deal of modernization. Automobile men are probably sorry there were not many used-car lots in the path of the muddy waters.

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> "Business often does appear to be better around a scene of disaster than it does in a normal community, and I believe Messrs. Foster and Catchings used to mention it . . . the theory was that a flood or a fire, preferably a fire because of the insurance, loosened up money, and its flow fertilized industry."

In a front page article, the financial editor, Richard Gridley, says:

> "In making predictions of expanding Pittsburgh business, authorities recalled the experiences of such cities as Chicago, San Francisco, Baltimore and Johnstown, which came back more prosperous than ever after suffering disasters comparable with those of the Pittsburgh flood."

In his political column, Raymond Clapper flaunts a headline "Floods May Become Boon for Democrats". He concludes his article:

> "Out of the spending which the flood has created may come a business boom—in fact the Democrats are almost persuaded to come out for bigger and better floods."

In these quotations we see the picture which has become typical in the depression, of the capitalist ghouls feeding on the corpses of the victims and the misery of the survivors. It is also evident that among the capitalists themselves—as in all disasters—those who lose heavily and are crushed are the small businessmen, mostly producing consumption goods, while the monopolists of the heavy industries are the ones who coin increased profits out of the disasters.

VI. FLOOD RELIEF, CONTROL, AND POLITICS

With the cry for relief rising from tens of thousands of flood sufferers, the federal, city, and state governments "swung into action". The City Council, while the waters were at their height, appropriated $1,000,000, but with the stipulation that this was to be used for property repairs only. In Washington, Roosevelt appropriated the magnificent sum of $1,000,000 for flood relief throughout the country. Later this was raised to $9,000,000, and then merged into a $25,000,000 fund to be expended through the W.P.A.; but prominent in the headlines announcing this benefaction were the statements, *"Money to Be Used for Repairs to Streets, Buildings, Sewers. None of the Cash to Be Used to Furnish Food and Clothing"*.

The liberal Governor Earle, who stands at the Left wing of the New Deal, rushed to Washington to present the needs of the people of Pennsylvania, and on leaving Washington stated: "Of course it would be impossible for the federal government to start

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giving compensation to those who have suffered losses." The *Pittsburgh Press*, bubbling over with thanks to Roosevelt for the W.P.A. appropriation, continues with an uncertain note that it is unable to conceal:

> "With the American Red Cross in charge, the problem of direct relief likewise would seem to be adequately handled. The Red Cross is dependent on public contributions of course—but we believe they will be forthcoming. . . . Funds are immediately needed to provide homeless refugees in this city and scores of other affected communities with food, clothing and shelter."

The whole flood relief policy of the federal government under the humanitarian Roosevelt differs not one iota from the policy of Hoover during the Mississippi floods when grain was distributed to prevent the wholesale death of livestock, but, under the government's orders, could under no conditions be used for "human food".

The moment that threats of a food shortage became serious in Pittsburgh, food profiteering began. The lead was given by the chain stores in two cases, stores of the Atlantic & Pacific *doubled their prices* on bread, butter, bacon, and other staples. The only thing that prevented a whole orgy of food profiteering was the spontaneous actions of the masses (some in places where the *Pittsburgh Daily Worker* had been sold), the beginning of agitation for the picketing of profiteering stores, and the re-establishment of communication with the outside world permitting truckloads of foodstuffs to come in.

But the menace of food profiteering has been followed by an actual orgy of rent profiteering. Pittsburgh and Allegheny County have for years been rated as one of the worst sections in the country for housing, with a standing shortage. A large number of dwellings have been destroyed by the flood, with the result that rents have been raised shamelessly, not alone in and around the flood-stricken area, but throughout the entire city.

As for the W.P.A., the excuse of emergency work has been utilized to put over the whole program of lengthening hours, making up lost time, etc., that was being fought so bitterly just before the flood.

But while the federal government provides nothing for direct relief and, of course, "cannot" pay compensation to working class victims, it finds itself able, as usual, to place the public treasury at the disposal of big business. Immediately after the flood, a meeting of industrial and financial leaders was held at which plans were made for everyone to dip into the R.F.C. funds and supply himself with "loans" to enable him to recoup his losses. Meanwhile, the newspapers, taking the lead from Mayor McNair, have begun a

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campaign against Roosevelt's proposed undivided surplus tax, giving the flood emergency as an example of why corporations must maintain fat undivided surpluses. As for the little business men who have really been ruined by the flood, the Pittsburgh bankers generously agreed to accept their applications for R.F.C. loans. "It was stressed, however, that borrowers would have to show good character as borrowers from banks, *and show good collateral.*"

Naturally, tremendous sentiment has developed for the carrying out of the flood control program. E. K. Morse, Chairman of the Emergency Committee which made the original report in 1909, declared:

> "In view of the unprecedentedly high waters here last week, anything but the complete Flood Commission plan for 17 dams would be inadequate.
>
> "Heretofore, we have made our estimates on the 38.7-foot flood crest of 1907, instead of the 46 feet that filled the Triangle last week.
>
> "It was only a miracle that we didn't have 50 or 55 feet. If last week's waters had come three weeks ago when the river stage was at 29 feet, Pittsburgh would have been wiped away."

This entire project would cost some $80,000,000, a mere fraction of the material damage caused by the flood, not to mention the human suffering and loss of life. The Tri-State Authority, consisting of the heads of 230 cities and towns in Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and West Virginia, headed by State Senator Rodgers, has been pushing the Flood Control Plan. (But, of course, it is not only floods that are profitable; flood control is also profitable, as who should know better than Senator Rodgers who is the head of sand and gravel interests that stand to make quite a nice little pile out of 17 dams.) While no one in Pittsburgh today dares to raise his voice against the Flood Control Project, nevertheless, the same forces that fought flood control for twenty-nine years are still working. One of the proposals to sidetrack the dam project is for a flood wall around the Golden Triangle and the business section of the North Side. But, aside from the fact that the wall would be useless without the reservoirs and dams, it should also be noted that the flood walls would in any case provide no protection for the working class areas downriver from the wall, and would even back up the water and make the flood worse in the working class areas higher up the river, above the wall.

And what of the greatest humanitarian of all, President Roosevelt himself? Yielding to the reactionary pressure of the Liberty Leaguers, Roosevelt is refraining from putting through any flood-control program. "Administration leaders", says Raymond Z. Henle, Washington correspondent of the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, "*are*

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under orders to do nothing which would upset the New Deal's plan to make a show of economy as the election approaches."

Of course, the one and a half billion dollar armanent budget will have no dangerous results either in creating cheap hydro-electric power or in saving life, and is therefore exempt from the claims of "economy", and besides, to use the words of Heywood Broun, "any comprehensive federal plan would be 'Communistic'. It would destroy initiative and keep row-boats out of the streets of our principal cities."

VII. THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

In this situation, convinced of the fact that neither flood relief nor control can be expected from the capitalist class unless the greatest amount of mass pressure is mobilized, and in order to organize the struggle against the attempts of the capitalists and the government to utilize the emergency to lower still further the standard of living of the masses, a number of prominent trade unionists, heads of fraternal and other working-class organizations, issued a Call for a Western Pennsylvania People's Conference on Flood Relief and Control, which was held in Pittsburgh on April 19. The program of the Conference, as given in the Call, says:

> "Over 75,000 in Allegheny County alone have suffered directly as a result of the flood. Thousands of families, workers and farmers, have lost every shred of their belongings. Small businessmen have been wiped out.
>
> "While some assistance has been given in feeding the sufferers by the Red Cross and other agencies, this is only temporary. The sufferers will soon be told to shift for themselves.
>
> "The air is full of plans for reconstruction and rehabilitation. The Chamber of Commerce is calling a conference of industrial and financial heads to see that their interests receive first consideration. Unless *the people* of Western Pennsylvania make *their* voices heard, the relief and reconstruction plans will leave out their needs and will be at their expense.
>
> "In order, therefore, to make clear the needs of the people resulting from the disaster, we are calling this Conference to take steps to secure the following:
>
> "1. Full compensation (instead of loans) by federal, state, county, and city governments for all flood losses suffered by workers, farmers and small businessmen.
>
> "2. Entire program of reconstruction to be carried through at prevailing union wages and under union conditions.
>
> "3. Direct relief to all flood sufferers as long as needed.
>
> "4. Federal government immediately to appropriate all funds required for full flood control program—all work at union wages and conditions."

This Conference was undoubtedly the broadest united front conference held on any issue in Western Pennsylvania in recent

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times. Over 225 delegates were present, directly representing more than 125,000, and indirectly representing some 250,000. Over 14,000 of those directly represented were trade union representation, excluding 30,000 represented by two Central Labor Unions.

The Conference proved to be a real outpouring of the mass indignation of the people over the treatment they have received both during and since the flood, definitely anti-capitalist and class-conscious in tone. One after another, flood-sufferers condemned the incompetence, neglect and callousness of the government authorities. But the extreme of condemnation was reserved by the delegates, for the Red Cross. "Robbers", "grabbers", hypocrites" were the terms used for the Red Cross even by the most conservative delegates. A particularly vivid and bitter picture was painted by a Borough Councilman of Etna, who was a delegate to the Conference. In sharp contrast to the capitalist press, especially the liberal *Pittsburgh Press*, which, immediately after the flood, published an editorial "Heroes of the Flood" in which it went into paens of praise for the cops and National Guard who "protected property for 24 hours a day", the Conference spontaneously passed a special resolution of thanks to the W.P.A. workers who labored so heroically and without rest to save life, and then to clean up the workers' homes. The Conference confirmed the correctness of the analysis of the situation made by the Party District Bureau and the issues raised.

A People's Flood Compensation Bill was adopted by the Conference, which in accordance with the promise made by Congressman Matthew Dunn in his address to the Conference, will be immediately introduced in Congress. Resolutions were adopted on the other points of the program, and a Program of Action was adopted, calling for local conferences and mass meetings. A campaign for endorsement by labor unions, city governments, fraternal organizations, clubs, etc., will be undertaken. The organization of local Associations of Flood Sufferers, pressure on congressmen and legislators, and a mass delegation to Harrisburg soon after the opening of the special session of the legislature, as well as a delegation to Washington, are planned.

To carry on the work, the Arrangements Committee of 37, which included over a dozen presidents of local unions, the heads of the most important fraternal organizations in Western Pennsylvania, Congressman Dunn, and other prominent figures, was broadened into a Continuations Committee with some 70 members, practically all leaders of important organizations. The Chairman of the Arrangements Committee and of the Conference was Richard H. Lawry, the Burgess of West Homestead, who in his own borough, has constantly identified himself with the interests of the workers.

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The Communist Party, which took the initiative in starting the movement, will continue to give its fullest support.

The "Harmony Committee" of Republicans and Democrats, appointed by Governor Earle to prepare the agenda for the special session of the Legislature in May, is already trying to ward off the flood relief question, announcing that it can only consider the issues of state relief for which it was originally called. It will be the task of the mass delegation from the Flood Conference to secure the introduction of the People's Flood Compensation Bill in the State Legislature, and to secure favorable action on the entire People's program.

There can already be no doubt that flood relief and control will become one of the central issues in the coming election campaign. The future of the People's Flood Relief Program is inextricably bound up with the perspective of a Farmer-Labor Party in Western Pennsylvania. Throughout the Conference there was evident the growing crystallization in the minds of the delegates, and of those who sent them, of the need for independent political action—of a Party of the people—now dramatized more sharply than ever by the lessons of the flood. It is no accident that the outstanding members of the Arrangements Committee that sponsored the Conference, are those who have come out for a Farmer-Labor Party in the 1936 elections. It will be necessary in every locality where local Farmer-Labor Parties are being established, such at the Tenth Legislative District of Allegheny County (Turtle Creek, etc.), the Eleventh (West Homestead, etc.), the Ninth (McKeesport), and in the Allegheny Valley, that these parties become the most energetic fighters for the People's Flood Relief Program. Similarly, in every one of the worst flooded areas, such as Manchester, McKess Rocks, Etna, and Vandergrift, the struggle for the People's Relief Program should lead to the building of a movement for a Farmer-Labor Party.

The class character of the government's actions on every question connected with the flood has effectively dramatized the need for representatives of the workers and farmers in the Legislature and in public office. Active work by the Communists and the progressives who support the Farmer-Labor Party movement will be able to convince masses of people to whom flood relief has become the outstanding issue, that only the struggle on the political field, the building of a Farmer-Labor Party, and fighting to elect Farmer-Labor representatives to the state legislature, to local offices, and to Congress will insure the carrying out of the People's Flood Relief Program.

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Japan, Outer Mongolia, and the Chinese Liberation Movement

By R. DOONPING

TO appraise the Far Eastern situation today means to ascertain the direction and immediate objective of Japanese policy and to estimate the strength and tempo of the development of the united front anti-imperialist, especially anti-Japanese, movement in China.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE FASCIST COUP IN JAPAN

The sudden gravity of the Mongolian situation in the last few weeks can be explained mainly by the relation of forces within the ruling class in Japan following the crisis of February 26. The fascist coup reveals the depth of the schism within the ruling class and exposes the instability of the existing regime, but also greatly sharpens the internal contradictions and weakens the striking power of the country as a whole. But, although the ruling class as a whole has beein weakened by the internal fight, the composition of the Hirota Cabinet indicates that the reactionary militarists have gained strength in relation to the other groups. The fascists failed in attaining their objective in establishing a full-fledged fascist regime a la Hitler, but they succeded in having one of their most vicious leaders, Baron Hiranuma, head of the most influential fascist mass organizations, the Kokuhonsha, appointed President of the Privy Council, replacing the veteran moderate statesman, Baron Ikki. They also got Arita, their closest henchman in the diplomatic service, installed as Foreign Minister. War Minister Terauchi does not belong to the fascist wing of the army, but neither is he an exponent of the so-called "moderate" policy. Just before the Cabinet was formed, he openly declared that "a Cabinet influenced by liberalism and intent on maintaining the status quo cannot be accepted". Koki Hirota, the new Premier, was once an active follower of Mitsum Toyama, head of the chauvinist Black Dragon Society, and now belongs to one of the fascist Kokuhonsha's subsidiary organizations.

The Cabinet as a whole, of course, represents a compromise between the militarist extremists (fascists) and the moderate conservatives, but its complexion is much more reactionary and aggressive that that of the Okada Cabinet. Leaning as much as it does on the reactionary militarists and knowing that the life of the Cabinet as well as that of its individual members would be threatened as soon

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as it shows any sign of weakness or moderation, the Hirota Cabinet is thus destined to follow a desperately strong policy. The general direction of the policy—conquest of China and war activities against the Soviet Union—of course, will not be changed. But the method of carrying it out has become more adventurous, and its immediate objective is becoming more and more ambitious.

JAPAN'S DESIGNS ON OUTER MONGOLIA

The growing appetite of Japan in regard to Outer Mongolia is clearly evidenced by the recent revival of "incidents" on the Mongolian-Manchoukuan border. The use of artillery, tanks, and airplanes, with hundreds of soldiers participating, gives a magnitude to these "incidents" that practically amounts to small-scale warfare. The recent provocations may be partly motivated by the desire on the part of Japan to demonstrate its readiness to strike on the Eastern front of the Soviet Union while its ally in the west, Germany, seeks to force upon Western Europe a *fait accompli* by the military occupation of the demilitarized Rhineland. It may also be true that Japan wants to divert the attention of the world from its advances in China, so as to discourage the tendency of the United States and Great Britain to draw closer to each other in common opposition to Japan's policy in China. But the main purpose of the border "incidents" against Outer Mongolia is to occupy that region and convert it from a revolutionary power into a military base for attacking the Soviet Union.

Outer Mongolia lies at the entrance to the Lake Baikal region in Sikena and is of enormous strategic importance. Supported by Japan, the notorious White Russian militarist, Baron Ungern-Steinberg, occupied Mongolia in 1921 and attempted to cut the Trans-Siberian railroad. With the help of the Soviet Red Army, the Mongolian revolutionists, that same year, liquidated the Ungern regime, overthrew the power of the princes and priests and established the Mongolian People's Republic—a democratic regime of the toiling masses. Japan has been supporting the remnants of White Russian elements from this region, as well as the Mongolian reactionary political emigrés, and the corrupt Mongol leaders in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia; and has intrigued with them for the last fifteen years for the restoration of semi-feudal power in Outer Mongolia. This is an integral part of its Manchurian-Mongolian policy. Nevertheless, the Japanese imperialists realize that the People's Republic of Outer Mongolia, governed by the toiling masses, is not like the old regime in Manchuria, controlled by the corrupt militarist Chang Hsueh-hiang. In previous border incidents, the Mongolian Revolutionary Army had already had occasion to show to the Japanese how

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valiantly it would fight to defend its border. At the beginning of March, in an interview with Roy Howard, of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, Comrade Stalin made it clear that if Outer Mongolia is invaded, the Soviet Union woud come to the help of the Mongolian people, as it did in 1921, to expell its invaders. Recently, a pact of mutual assistance was concluded by the Soviet Union and Outer Mongolia. Under these circumstances, the fact that the Japanese imperialists dare to go as far as they do is highly significant. If Tokyo is directly responsible for this policy, it indicates the desperate and reckless character of its foreign policy. If, as is thought in many quarters, the Kwantung Army, Japan's Continental Army, has staged these incidents in order to force the hand of Tokyo, the situation is just as dangerous. The whole trend of development indicates the dogged persistence on the part of the Japanese militarists to risk great odds to destroy the revolutionary power in Outer Mongolia, to add Outer Mongolia to Japan's colonial empire, and together with its Western ally, Germany, to attack the Soviet Union.

JAPAN DRIVES FOR THE CONQUEST OF CHINA

While pushing its war policy against Outer Mongolia in the North, Japanese imperialism is continuing its policy of conquest with regard to China. Taking advantage of Chiang Kai-shek's policy of non-resistance and shameless capitulation, Japanese imperialism followed up its occupation of Manchuria with the taking of Jehol and the organization of the four Chinese provinces into the puppet state of Manchoukuo. Then it launched the so-called "autonomous" movement, first in Hopei and Chahar, with the purpose of spreading it over the whole of North China. At its inception, Japanese sponsors of the "autonomous" movement thought it wise to give it the semblance of a popular movement. Hordes of "autonomists" appeared in the streets of Peiping and Tientsin last autumn, demonstrating and demanding "autonomy" for North China. When questioned, many of the demonstrators professed ignorance of the real purpose of the demonstration, stating that they were each paid 40 cents (13 cents in American money) and ordered to demand "autonomy"; but as to details they were still awaiting orders.* Despite this farce, however, the "autonomy" movement bore fruit, thanks to the Japanese army and Chiang Kai-shek's non-resistance policy. With the organization of the Chahar-Hopei Political Council last

* The source from which this is taken is the Manifesto of the Save China Association of the Cultural Professions in Peiping, issued in December, 1935, and published in the Shanghai Chinese weekly, *The Life of the Masses*, February 15, 1936.

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December two of the most important North China provinces practically, though not yet formally, passed under Japanese control.

Ever since then, Japan has been pressing Nanking to carry out the so-called Hirota three principles, which it claims Chiang Kai-shek accepted. The three principles, which demand the suppression of all anti-Japanese organizations in China; economic cooperation between China, Japan, and "Manchoukuo" (involving the recognition of Manchoukuo); and Sino-Japanese cooperation for the suppression of Communists, aim to convert China from a semi-colony into a colony of Japan and constitute the general line of Japanese advance in China. Since the formation of the Hirota Cabinet, pressure on Nanking to carry out these demands have greatly increased, resulting in Nanking's intensified effort to suppress the student and other popular movements which have sprung up throughout China since the Chahar-Hopei affair. In order to guage the strength and tempo of development of the united front anti-Japanese movement, and to estimate the probable effect of Chiang Kai-shek's suppressive measures, it will be necessary to trace briefly the recent history of the student movement.

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST UNITED FRONT

Chinese indignation has been mounting ever since the formation of the puppet state, Manchoukuo. When the so-called "autonomous" movement was staged in Peiping and Tientsin, the patience of the Chinese people was exhausted. The students of Peiping, as they did in May, 1919, led the way. On December 9, just a few weeks after the organization of the Peiping Students' Union, over 5,000 students of Peiping universities, colleges, and middle schools demonstrated in protest against the "autonomy" of North China or the setting up of any other puppet organization, against the diplomacy of capitulation, against the arrest of students, for the protection of freedom of speech and organization, and for armed defense of North China against Japanese invasion. The authorities ordered the police and soldiers to attack the students with water, whips, gun-butts, and bayonets. The students resisted. The battle, spreading to all parts of the city, lasted fourteen hours. Over a thousand students from two leading universities, Tsing Hua and Yenching, in the suburbs, found the city gates closed to them and stood in the cold the whole day, vainly struggling to enter the city in order to join their fellow students. During the heat of the struggle, the students voluntarily raised the slogans of "Down with Chinese traitors!" and "Down with Japanese imperialism!". With 40 wounded and 14 arrested, the students' indignation was further

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heightened. On the 16th, a much more powerful demonstration —10,000 strong—occupied the streets of Peiping. The students of the two suburban universities succeeded in forcing open the iron door of one of the gates. It was the day set for the formal inauguration of the puppet organ, "Hopei-Chahar Political Council". Hence, the chief slogans of the demonstration were "Against the Hopei-Chahar Political Council!" and "Arm all the people for resistance against the Japanese invaders!" The police and soldiers were unspeakably brutal in battling the students all afternoon and throughout half of the night. They wounded over 200 and caused the arrest and disappearance of over 60 others.

Peiping students occupy a unique position in the political life of China. The total student population from middle school upward is well over 30,000. Of these, 13,517 are enrolled in the 19 leading colleges and universities which attract students from all over the country. Thus, just as Nanking is the political capital, and Shanghai the economic capital, Peiping is the educational capital of China. With the trail blazed by the Peiping students, a mass student movement can easily spread throughout the country. This is what happened in May, 1919, and this is what happened in December, 1935. The demonstrations of December 9 and December 16 had a tremendous influence on the students throughout the land. On the 18th, 6,000 students from 17 universities and colleges demonstrated in Tientsin. The demonstration resulted in the organization of the Tientsin Students' Union, which later joined the Peiping students and formed the powerful Peiping-Tientsin Students' Alliance.

Demonstrations of a similar nature took place in virtually all the leading educational centers in Shanghai, Wuchang, Hankow, Canton, Hangchow, Taiyuan, and Tsinan. In each place, virtually 99 per cent of the student body in middle schools, colleges, and universities participated. It was a mass movement of the first magnitude.

In January, the Peiping-Tientsin Students' Union decided to broaden the scope of its educational activities and to appeal to the people in the small towns and villages in Hopei province. Organized into four educational corps, hundreds of students set out in four directions to various parts of the province. After many bitter encounters with agents and gendarmes sent by the puppet Hopei-Chahar Political Council, the student educators were scattered, but not before they had made a profound impression on the villagers. The following report of the response of the people to the student speakers is extremely significant:

> "The people voluntarily offered water to the speakers. . . . The people not only poured out of the town gates to welcome us,

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but they presented us with food. Even the local police and Chambers of Commerce provided us with lodging. . . . The most moving experience is the speech of the police chief of Hsi-hi village. With tears in his eyes, he said, 'We all want to save the country; but our actions are limited by the lack of orders to that effect from the higher authorities and we really are at a loss as to what to say.'" (*Life of the Masses*, February 1, 1936.)

This attitude is by no means true only of an isolated group. The nation was ready for a big mass movement. Small wonder that the student movement had an electrifying effect on the whole nation. Since the inspiring days of 1925-27, the nation had never witnessed such a revival of the mass movement. People from all walks of life responded to the students' call "to resist Japanese invasion and save the nation".

First in answering the call of the students was the Save-China movement launched by the Shanghai cultural workers. Over 300 prominent professors, journalists, and writers signed a ringing manifesto, declaring their determination:

"(1) To maintain the territorial integrity of China, refusing to recognize all treaties and agreements that infringe on the sovereignty of China; (2) to oppose the establishment of foreign-sponsored special administrative organs on Chinese soil; (3) to refuse to treat the Northeast [Manchurian] and the North China problems as local affairs and to regard them as problems of China's territorial sovereignty as a whole; (4) to demand the sending of a military expedition against the Eastern Hopei and Manchurian puppet organs; (5) to demand resistance against the invaders with the military and financial power of the whole country; (6) to demand the severe punishment of all traitors and confiscation of their property; (7) to demand the freedom of organization, assembly, speech, and publication for the people; and, (8) to rally the masses of the whole country to set up voluntarily organizations for carrying out, with proper means, our Save-China program."

On December 27, a few days after the issuance of the Shanghai manifesto, over 150 Peiping professors, journalists, and cultural workers published a similar manifesto, and adopted the eight-point program of the Shanghai manifesto, which they regard as "the minimum condition for the maintenance of China's independence and freedom and the only way to save North China for the Chinese people!"

NANKING'S ATTEMPT TO SUPPRESS THE ANTI-JAPANESE MOVEMENT

The most outstanding feature of the development of the recent student movement is that not only enormous difficulties were overcome by the students but that after each crisis, the movement always

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ascended to a higher level. This is highly significant in itself, but is even more important as the harbinger of a new revolutionary wave. The Japanese imperialists know this very well, and as a preparation for further advances in China, have evidently made up their mind to crush the movement. In order to achieve this purpose, they prevailed upon Chiang Kai-shek to carry out the first point in the three Hirota demands, namely, the suppression of the anti-Japanese movement. On February 11, the Publicity Bureau of the Kuomintang in Nanking gave warning to the students and ordered the local authorities to suppress the student movement. February 20 saw the promulgation of the Emergency Law for the suppression of the people's mass liberation movement as a whole.

The promulgation of the law was followed immediately by the tightening of press censorship and the suppression of the influential weekly magazine, *The Life of the Masses*, which, fourteen weeks after its publication, had reached a circulation of 120,000 copies. Under cover of the Emergency Law, the Peiping puppet authorities, nominally under Sung Cheh-yuan's leadership, instituted a brutal program of suppression. Bought agents were planted in the various universities in an effort to split the Students' Unions and provocative tactics were followed to provide excuses for suppressing the Students' Unions. In the first week in March it was estimated that about 200 students were held in prison awaiting "trial", while "those against whom there is any evidence of being connected with the Students' Union or 'radical' activities are reported to have been badly tortured in an effort to extort confession or information" (*China Weekly Review*, *March* 21). Rewards up to $10,000 were offered for denunciations of members of the Communist Party. Three professors from the National University of Peking and two professors from Tsing Hua University were also arrested. Secret arrests are going on in the streets, and no record of these arrests have been kept. Thus, with Chiang Kai-shek's help, the immediate objective of Japanese policy in China, the suppression of the people's liberation movement, seems to bear fruit. However, the most thankless task in the world is the effort to suppress a mass movement in a period of a rising revolutionary wave. The Peiping correspondent of the *China Weekly Review* significantly reports in the issue of March 21:

> "Fearful lest the whole anti-Japanese movement in the North may be dispersed, the students are now organizing a strong opposition to the Emergency Laws, mass meetings voting to ask the government to rescind these, to withdraw the order suppressing the Peiping-Tientsin Students' Union, and voting to strongly support the Union in order to maintain the independence of the student movement at all costs. The effect of the suppression is to turn the students as a mass into a Left opposition to the government, the policy of 'beheading' the

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movement by arresting all the leaders as 'Communists' serving merely to swing the body of the movement further to the Left."

The movement of the students and professional workers in China is only a partial manifestation of the liberation movement as a whole. The most decisive role in the anti-imperialist struggle in China today is undoubtedly played by the workers and peasants in Soviet China as well as in Kuomintang China. The most significant thing that has recently occurred in the workers' movement in Kuomintang China is the series of anti-Japanese strikes in Shanghai. The occasion that precipitated the first of the strikes, on February 8, was very significant. On accidentally discovering that one of the Chinese workers in a Japanese textile factory had been a former soldier in the famous Nineteenth Route Army, the owner of the factory had the worker tortured and beaten to death. The protest strike that followed was joined by workers in many factories. The political significance of this strike hardly needs elaboration. The anti-Japanese strike wave is likely to lead to greater and more important developments than even the student movement.

The recent consolidation of the Soviet District in Western Szechwan province and the march of the leading sections of the Red Army to Shansi and the southern part of Inner Mongolia have not only strengthened the people's liberation movement but have also opened up tremendous possibilities for an extension of that movement. The Chinese Soviet government's determined policy of bringing about a broad anti-imperialist people's front can best be seen from the interview recently given the Chinese revolutionary press by Comrade Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of Soviet China. On the question of the work of the Soviet government for the organization of the anti-Japanese front in China, Comrade Mao says:

"The establishment of the united front, for the struggle against Japan and for the deliverance of the country, with all political groups and all parties, regardless of previous points of view, throughout China—that is the policy being pursued by the [Chinese] Soviet government with all its heart, determination, and persistence. Our efforts aim at realizing this great object with all the forces and means at our disposal. The Soviet government is at all times and at all places ready to conduct negotiations with anyone who is prepared to fight against Japan. In all our negotiations we make one fundamental condition only: struggle against Japan for the deliverance of the country."

Of particular interest to the American people is the statement regarding Soviet China's foreign policy by its Commissar of Foreign Affairs:

"If the chief enemy confronting us is Japanese imperialism, then the countries which preserve a benevolent neutrality towards our

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> struggle against Japan are our friends (and we are ready to maintain friendly diplomatic relations, based on equality, with them). Our country is still backward economically; hence we must cooperate with those which are economically progressive. Therefore the Soviet government is prepared to conclude economic agreements, based on equality, with all countries which are friendly to us. The annulment of the unequal treaties is, however, one of the most important foreign political tasks of the Chinese Soviet government. This can be done with all countries—except with Japan—by way of diplomatic negotiation. Japanese imperialism is the most dangerous enemy of the Chinese people. With every other country the Chinese Soviet government wishes to maintain peaceful and friendly relations in the interests of the Chinese people."

It is clear that this foreign policy is formulated in harmony with the general people's front policy against Japanese invasion.

In order to hasten the process of the development of the people's front against Japanese imperialism in China and to insure peace in the Far East, the American workers, farmers, and intellectuals—the broad masses of the people—should make their great influence felt in the Far East by rallying to the support of the Chinese student movement and to protest against its suppression. In an appeal to the American Students' Union, the Peiping Students' Union stated correctly that "International public opinion is a powerful weapon", and called upon the American students to "protest to the Chinese authorities against the disgraceful suppression of the Chinese student movement". It is the duty of the American students to give a clear answer of solidarity to this appeal. The facts of Soviet China's efforts to organize the anti-Japanese front, particularly its foreign policy, must be widely broadcast in the United States. Through the anti-war and anti-fascist movements in the United States, pressure must be brought to bear on the American government to collaborate with all the forces of peace in the Far East. Independent struggles of the workers and of the masses as a whole through their organizations must be developed to stop the shipment of munitions to Japan and put all possible obstacles in the way of Japan's war policy. In order to do these things effectively, the American Friends of the Chinese People and its magazine *China Today* must be strengthened as instruments in the building of a powerful movement in America for the support of the Chinese liberation movement, and against the drive of the Japanese militarists toward war and imperialist expansion.

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Political Highlights of the National Negro Congress

By JAMES W. FORD

AT THE National Negro Congress held at Chicago on February 14-16, 1936, the trade union delegates were successful in strongly impressing working class opinion on the Congress. By emphasizing the basis of working class interests, the need for organization into trade unions as well as of independent political action in the form of a Farmer-Labor Party, they were able to show the Congress that the trade unions would play the decisive role in the advancement of the whole life of the Negro people.

We concluded in our last article * that if the movement of the Negro people in the struggle for their freedom were properly understood and conducted by the advanced sections, both Negro and white, it could aid in the struggles of the entire toiling population.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FASCISM AND WAR

We come now to another high light of the National Negro Congress, *viz.*, the involving of sections of the entire Negro population in the fight for peace, and against fascism and war; and the influencing of world opinion in favor of Ethiopia and in the problems of Negroes everywhere.

As an oppressed group, the Negro people have carried on an age-old fight against lynching and for civil rights and decent human relations. Now their attention is riveted on the menace of fascism to their individual and collective life, which is so clearly seen in the attack of Italian fascism on the last independent Negro state, Ethiopia, as well as in the fascist methods used against Negroes in this country. The Negroes are developing a higher understanding of these issues, higher than ever before, and are taking an advanced position among the progressive, liberty- and peace-loving forces in the fight against fascism.

The Congress emphatically showed this trend. Special sessions were held on the topics of "Fascism and War" and "Civil Liberties, Lynching, and Terror". In the general sessions of the Congress exceptionally clear discussions were heard and in the final session important resolutions were adopted on fascism and war. Practically

* See *The Communist* for April.

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the entire Congress was vigorous in its condemnation of fascism and war and in its willingness to fight against the twin menace.

A fairly accurate description of the danger of war and of the fascist forces was given by A. Philip Randolph:

> "War looms on the horizon . . . already fascist Italy is on the march to subjugate the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia. . . . France and Germany are in a state of truce, awaiting the hour to strike for another conflict. . . . Italy and England are in competition for place and prestige in the Mediterranean and Africa, while Japan threatens to close the open door to American investments and advance her claim to the adoption of a Monroe Doctrine over the Pacific which may bring 'Uncle Sam' and 'Nippon' to grips. . . . Meanwhile Tokio proceeds on its long conquering trek of China. . . . Japan is restive in the face of the constant growth and power of Soviet Russia and is steadily resorting to provocative acts of war. . . . Hitler seeks to serve as a spearhead of modern monopoly capitalism against the workers' republic." *

THE LIE IS GIVEN TO MUSSOLINI'S DEMAGOGY

The declaration of Mussolini that the Ethiopian war was necessary so that Italy might take the great civilization of Rome to the desolate land of Ethiopia was never more dramatically given the lie before an American audience than on the opening night of the Congress, when Lij Tasfaye Zaphiro, special envoy of the London Legation of Ethiopia, spoke to more than 6,000 people. A highly cultured young man, speaking in perfect English, calm and deliberate, he said:

> "We have been called barbarians, not able to govern our own land. But Ethiopia is not the only country today in which barbarism exists.
>
> "This war is not unlike the American War of Independence. Ethiopia is fighting for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in her own land. We are fighting to preserve our independence and integrity. Ethiopia's defeat may mean the downfall of the collective security system and perhaps the end of the League of Nations. If Ethiopia wins, as she will if she is supported, it will strengthen the League of Nations and show that world sentiment must be respected."

Compare this analysis and attitude towards the collective security peace policy of the Soviet Union with the barbaric actions of Mussolini, who rains bombs and poison gas down upon defenseless men, women, and children—"a barbaric people"; or with Hitler, who takes advantage of the situation to prepare a barbaric war on a world scale; or with the Japanese militarist clique, in their drive to bring the entire Chinese people under the heel of Japanese imperialism and to penetrate into Soviet territory; or with the most reactionary forces

* From the Proceedings of the National Negro Congress.

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in England, France, and the United States, that actively urge on this slaughter.

THE SHAM NEUTRALITY ACT EXPOSED

The Negro people of the United States, as a decisive section of the citizenry of this country, have a right to demand that the vacillations of the Administration cease. The sham Neutrality Act directly aids Italian fascism against Ethiopia by facilitating the shipment of munitions of war to Italy; and the unwillingness of the United States government to join in collective actions to isolate Italy plays into the hands of the most reactionary war forces in the country.

The Congress unanimously adopted resolutions against fascism and war, calling for the condemnation of Italian fascist attacks on Ethiopia. Such barbarism "reveals the nature of fascism in that it suppresses all individual and democratic freedom and ruthlessly violates the rights of other peoples and nations". The Congress endorsed the struggle for peace and indicated that a successful fight to defeat Italian fascism would not only render great support to the interests of peace and the maintenance of the independence of a small nation, but would liberate the Italian people from the yoke of the fascist dictatorship in Italy.

The Congress exposed the weakness of the Neutrality Act of the United States which operates to aid Italy, as against Ethiopia. It demanded that the Congress of the United States extend the Neutrality Act to include a ban on oil, metals, cotton, and other war materials, raw and finished; it called upon workers in the transport industry to refuse to handle shipments of war supplies to Italy.

The Congress sponsored the setting up of a national organization called the United American Association for Aid to Ethiopia and issued an appeal for financial, moral, and other support to this association to aid the fight "against atrocities being committed upon Ethiopia by the invading armies of Mussolini and the fascist party".

HEARST CONDEMNED BY THE CONGRESS

One of the most dramatic incidents of the Congress occurred when a motion was made to endorse a resolution against the Hearst press. The whole Congress went into an uproar. Copies of Hearst papers were torn into shreds and flung into the air. This outburst came spontaneously from a people bitterly harassed by a hostile and vicious fascist press. After this, a resolution was adopted which urged Negroes and other opponents of war and fascism to insist that business firms refuse to advertise in the Hearst press.

> "Whereas, there is a section of the American press distinctly hostile to the interests of Ethiopia," read the resolution, "therefore,

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be it resolved, that this Congress urge all Negroes and other Americans opposed to fascism and war, to refuse to purchase papers and publications of Hearst and other sections of the hostile press."

The anti-fascist movement developing in this country no doubt influenced the deliberations of the delegates at the Congress. Large numbers of Negroes had already taken part in this movement, which originated in New York and spread throughout the country. It reached great heights on August 3 in Harlem, when the Negro people, together with friends of Ethiopian independence, marched in a mighty anti-war, anti-fascist demonstration.

This demonstration threw consternation into the hearts of the warmongers and fascists. It placed Mussolini in the uncomfortable position of making indignant declarations against the Negro people of America. This movement had a decisive influence on world affairs at that time. When interviewed at Geneva by a delegation of American Negroes, including a representative of the Communist Party of the United States, the ambassador of Ethiopia, Tecle Hawariate, praised the Defense of Ethiopia movement in the United States. Many of the points raised by Mr. Hawariate in that interview, on how to aid Ethiopia and defend peace, were acted upon by the National Negro Congress.

WORLD-WIDE INTEREST IN THE CONGRESS

The presence of Mr. Max Yeargan, from Capetown, South Africa, Secretary of the South African work of the International Committee of the Y. M. C. A., brought additional international interest and significance to the National Negro Congress. Mr. Yeargan, an American Negro, who has spent the past fifteen years in Africa, traveling and observing the ravages of imperialism, painted a vivid picture of the conditions of Negroes in Africa. He said:

"The capitalist trusts divide up the spoils and partition the territories of the world among themselves. This phase of imperialism has manifested itself in every part of the African continent. Britain, France, and other European countries have taken much of the land. . . . Various new forms of labor are forced on the people, and labor is drained out of the country. . . .

"Imperialism, then, means annexation of land and confiscation of labor. . . . It destroys the culture—the basic social fabric of the people's life. In South Africa, through the color laws, Africans are kept out of many phases of skilled labor and on the lowest level, industrially. Laws limiting freedom of assembly make it difficult for them to organize to defend themselves. Other legislation prevents their moving about freely. . . .

"This Congress has the opportunity and responsibility to make it possible for all organizations here represented to subscribe to a minimum program—to fight for those things on which the organizations are in agreement."

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The Congress was duly influenced by the active participation of these representatives from abroad. The Congress condemned any form of discrimination against foreign-born Negroes in the United States and opposed any attempt to deport or drop them from relief or employment; it advised better relations between foreign-born and native-born Negroes and went on record to support people of African descent in their struggle for economic and political freedom in their respective countries.

The Congress attracted the interest of Negro people in other countries, particularly Cuba, where one-third of the population is Negro. The double exploitation of American imperialist domination and that of the Cuban bourgeoisie oppress the whole toiling population. Lack of funds prevented a delegation of Cuban Negroes from coming to the United States as fraternal delegates to the National Negro Congress.

But already plans are under way to hold a National Negro Congress in Cuba. At this writing we have just received information requesting American workers to demand the freedom of 63 by Cuban authorities because they elected delegates and requested representation at the National Negro Congress to be held in Cuba in the near future.

FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF NEGROES

Hence, the National Negro Congress in the United States occupies an important place in the life and struggles of Negroes everywhere. That is why the Congress adopted a resolution on an International Congress of Negroes, as follows:

> "Whereas, the exploitation and subjugation of the Negro masses is general, and world-wide in scope, and Negro toilers in one nation are not free so long as their brother toilers elsewhere are subjected to the degrading horrors of exploitation, and
>
> "Whereas, a deeper sympathy and class-consciousness of all Negroes throughout the world can best be developed by an International Congress of Negroes, be it
>
> "Resolved, that immediately upon the establishment of this Congress upon a permanent basis, it work for the fulfillment of such an International Congress of Negroes."

The Congress mapped out a plan to unite the fight for civil liberties for Negroes, against lynching, jim-crowism, residential segregation and disfranchisement, with the struggle against gag-laws, such as the Tydings-McCormack Act, the Kramer Sedition Bill, the Washington Anti-Communist Rider, Criminal Syndicalism laws, and Teachers' Oath laws.

The Negro people and their various organizations have waged

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long years of struggle against these evils. But the struggles are now being developed into a political program of struggle together with other toilers. If Joseph Shoemaker, a white Socialist worker, is lynched in Tampa, and black and white sharecroppers are shot by landlord gangs in the deep South; if the electoral system denies white workers political and civil rights, then this means that the National Negro Congress was reacting to the most burning issues of the day when it adopted resolutions on these questions, when it demanded the enforcement of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution guaranteeing civil liberties and the passage of the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill.

The Liberty League intends to bring darker reaction into the country and against the Negro people. The most reactionary section of the bourgeoisie is working to establish its terroristic rule over the toiling masses and to treat the Negroes even more as outcasts. Herein lies the all-inclusive significance of the National Negro Congress and the importance to be attached to the movement developed against fascism and war, to prepare the masses of Negroes to struggle in defense of the smallest civil liberty and for free citizenship on an equal footing with their white brothers.

THE UNITED FRONT

United action of the Negro people through their basic organizations was therefore stressed by the leading sponsors of the Congress. The Negro people, as a people, are the most commonly oppressed in every sphere of life. But this is not admitted by some of the so-called "friends of the Negro people" and even by some individuals in the ranks of the Negro people themselves. They cannot understand, if, indeed, they desire to, why it is that the National Negro Congress was "solicitous about the needs of small Negro business people". The small business man hates big capital, even more so the small Negro business man hates big capital because of the discriminatory practices which crush his aspirations for livelihood and cultural advancement. The aim of the united front should be to get the widest section of the masses into struggle under the guidance of the working class and trade union organizations, even on the basis of the smallest grievance. That is why the National Negro Congress expressed the grievance of small Negro business people, but advocated the organization of consumers' and producers' cooperatives and the unionization of employees as the progressive road to the solution of the problems of these people.

In like manner, the Congress endorsed measures for advancing the position of Negro culture and cultural workers. The fight against the caricaturing of Negro culture and the exploitation of Negro

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theater people is no doubt what inspired Rose McClendon, outstanding Negro actress, to declare in the *New York Times* of June 30, 1935, that "what makes a Negro theater is . . . the selection of plays that deal with Negroes, with Negro problems, with phases of Negro life, faithfully presented and accurately delineated . . . and that a theater can be developed and operated by Negroes as a cultural experiment based on a program of social realism", which "could in the course of time alone create a tradition that would equal the tradition of any national group".

For these and other reasons the National Negro Congress made a definite appeal to various sections and organizations of the Negro people.

There are thousands of Negro organizations, fraternal societies, lodges, social clubs, student bodies, Greek Letter Societies, and churches. The membership of these organizations is largely of working class composition, and all members are affected by a jim-crow status.

Hundreds of thousands of men and women, eligible for trade union membership, but denied admittance by the jim-crow policies of many international unions, are members of these organizations.

It is estimated that the membership of the Negro church is seven or eight million. Some people, however, say: "Never mind the people in the church. Let the hundred thousand Negro trade unionists keep together and away from these people. We are pure!" But the Negro Congress did not take this position. Neither do advanced Negro trade unionists. They say those people should belong to trade unions. Let us get them into the unions!

The Negro church has solid contacts with the Negro masses. In the long history of the peculiar social life of the Negro people it has always been a center of social activity, at one time being the exclusive center for amusement, drama, club life, etc.

Within the church there are study circles, auxiliary committees, Young People's Circles, Epworth Leagues, Young People's Baptist Leagues, where all sorts of topics, religious and secular, are discussed.

There are numerous small churches with a large aggregate membership. The leaders are usually very close to the masses and react to the needs of these poorer parishioners. A single talk by the leaders of these churches on the need of joining a trade union could result, for example, in building almost over night a Domestic Workers' Union of 500 members, in Harlem alone. This is not a far-fetched possibility.

That is why much importance can be attached to the resolution adopted by the church session of the National Negro Congress, participated in by influential churchmen. It calls for the church "to

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work out an adequate technique comprehending social and economic problems affecting our group and working with non-Christian groups whose economic and social ideas are of value to the solution of our economic and social problems". Significant, too, is that part of the resolution which recommends "that every fifth Sunday shall be set aside in every church in support of the work and program of the National Negro Congress".

The National Negro Congress did not adopt a Communist program. But we Communists stand one hundred per cent behind it in its effort to unite the Negro people upon a common program and with a common tactic, to fight for the advancement of the Negro people, against all forms of discrimination, against fascism and war, for equal rights, and on issues which are in the interests of all the toiling masses of the country in advancing the general fight against capital.

Today the tactic of the united front is bringing together large masses of Negroes; yet the consolidation of the organized united front among the Negro people is still weak. The responsibility for this must be lodged with those who stand in the way of unity. And as for those people who are so simon-pure in their proletarian outlook that they cannot or do not care to concern themselves with the problems of the miserable life of the Negro people, let them remember the picture of an entire Negro people, so poignantly depicted by the Negro poet, Paul Lawrence Dunbar:

"A crust of bread and a corner to sleep in,
A minute to smile and an hour to weep in,
A pint of joy to a peck of trouble,
And never a laugh but the moans come double
And that is life."

(*To be concluded*)

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Organizational Changes in the New York District of the Party

By I. AMTER

AT the last meeting of the Central Committee, it was decided that the Party was to make experiments in the direction of adapting its organizational form and structure to the situation in each locality. This became necessary and possible owing to the fact that the Party is engaged in broad united front activity which necessitates different forms of organization to attain the best results.

The Central Committee emphasized, as the District does, that the *shop nucleus remains the basic unit of the Party*. All efforts must be exerted in the building of Party units in plants of basic industries. This is all the more important in view of the fact that the basic industries of the country are in the main not organized. Even though the Committee for Industrial Organization has announced the fact that it intends to conduct a drive for industrial organization, nevertheless, as pointed out in the recent article by Comrade Foster, this drive will be successful only if there are committees formed in each locality to push the drive in spite of all obstacles. *The existence of a Party nucleus in the shop is the greatest guarantee that the work for industrial organization in the shop will be pushed forward.* The development of this work is one of the most important tasks of the Party, and applies to the New York District as well as to other Districts, since, although in New York City the workers are fairly well organized, nevertheless, throughout the state, and especially in such important industries as steel (Lackawanna), power, and chemicals (Niagara Falls), textiles, etc., the workers are very weakly unionized. Therefore, in consideration of any changes in organizational form, we must lay stress upon the intensification of our work for establishing shop nuclei in all large shops, but above all in those of basic industries.

It is necessary to emphasize this, owing to the fact that the broadening of organizational forms in other respects might lead to a weakening of concentration in heavy industry. This has already been noted in the New York District, where, although the number of shop nuclei has grown, nevertheless, owing to the attention paid to the newer forms, a certain amount of neglect has resulted in connection with the building and strengthening of shop nuclei.

In view of the broadening united front struggles and the necessity of adapting the Party organizational form also to the political

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units of the country, the New York District has decided to create: (1) A State Committee; (2) County Committees; (3) Assembly Sections; (4) Assembly Branches.

For the New York District it is practicable to build up a State Committee, since the Buffalo District has been incorporated into the New York District. Owing, however, to the growth of the Party organization in New York City, with its 26 Sections, it has become unwieldy to deal with the concrete problems of each of these Sections without an intermediate body. Therefore the District has decided to create County organizations in the Bronx and Brooklyn, to begin with. The Sections up until recently were organized almost on arbitrary lines, without regard to the political or electoral units that they contain. The Sections have now been reorganized on the basis of Assembly District boundaries. This has, with very few exceptions, meant no splitting up of territory containing establishments of a particular industry. Where this was necessary, the Party Assembly District line has been changed to conform to the need of concentration upon the industry.

Let us examine these various forms of organization. Nothing further need be said about the State Committee, which is in essence and fact the District Committee of the Party. The County Committee, on the other hand, makes it possible for the Party to place in such political subdivisions a representative committee of the Party with an organizer at its head. These committees were set up at County Conventions. They are eventually to lead the Sections as would a sub-District Committee, having a complete apparatus, handling dues stamps, literature, etc. The Party organization, however, is not yet in a position to deal with all these matters with sufficient clarity, owing to a lack of experience. Consequently, the County Committees are in a stage of *transition*. Immediately after the National Conventions, new County Conventions will be called, at which the experiences of the last few months will be weighed and a full apparatus will be set up having full jurisdiction and authority over the Sections embraced in the County.

COUNTY COMMITTEES NECESSARY TO STRENGTHEN FARMER-LABOR PARTY MOVEMENT

It is essential to have these County Committees in view of the movement for the Labor Party and the campaigns for united fronts with organizations, including the Socialist Party. In addition, it will be much easier for the County Committees to make themselves thoroughly conversant with all the problems in the county, which in New York City find their expression to some degree in county politics. This will make the work of the Sections in relation

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to the county much more concrete and will involve them in united action in mobilizing the workers and other sections of the people for demands upon the county officials.

In the organization of the Assembly District Sections, we have noted that there is a greater consciousness on the part of the Section Committees as to the needs of the population in their territory, as well as to all the problems arising directly out of the assembly district organization. Not only are Sections now in a far better position to present demands to their state assemblymen as well as the aldermen who represent the aldermanic districts and the various assembly districts but they are also able to raise questions in a manner far more understandable to the people generally.

Up to the present time our Party has unfortunately failed to grasp the importance of the designation of political names for the political units set up by the bourgeoisie. In the process of Americanization, both of our approach to problems and our designation of these problems, we are making the workers understand much more readily that we are a Party conscious of its tasks. This has become so much clearer now that a few of the Assembly District Sections have set up Research Committees, running parallel to the District Research Committee, and have taken upon themselves the conducting of intense research into the activities of their aldermen and assemblymen, into the specific living conditions in the section. For example, in one assembly district, a member of a branch made it his business to examine the infringements upon a law that recently went into effect, namely the Multiple Dwelling Law. This law was enacted in order to protect the occupants of old-law tenement houses—houses that were built some 50 to 100 years ago, and have no safety appliances whatsoever, to say nothing about sanitation conditions. As a result of that examination we found there are 67 houses on record within a radius of only a few blocks where struggles can be organized for the enforcement of this law. A victorious outcome would mean greater safety for the tenants, and work for thousands of building trades workers.

The assembly branches are units of the Party on a broad base, working within the Assembly District. Thus far, only one assembly branch in a Section has been formed and only a certain number of branches have been established. They were formed through the amalgamation of two, three, or four Party units. Prior to this amalgamation, the units used to meet in homes or halls. They generally embraced from 20 to 30 members. Many of the members, however, were active in the trade unions or other organizations and had other assignments which made it difficult if not impossible for them to be active in the units.

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WEAKNESS SHOWN IN ORGANIZING ASSEMBLY BRANCHES

Where the assembly branches were properly formed, they are working in a very efficient manner. Not all of these branches were properly organized, however. Where they were, a survey was made of the available forces, in order, first of all, to get a good branch executive, even though temporary, to bring the forces together and put them to work; and immediately to assign groups of comrades for various forms of activity in the neighborhood, such as unemployed work, penetration of mass organizations, *Daily Worker* sales, etc. In too many instances, however, the membership of the various units that were to be amalgamated were simply called together. They did not know one another before the executive was set up. Because of the confusion, the group system was not installed at once, with the result that for some time the branches have floundered.

The system of groups with captains at their head is *imperative* in branches. The branches have a large membership. If the group captain does not check up on the attendance of his members at branch meetings, there is a serious danger of high fluctuation in the membership. We already face this in the New York District.

Where the branch works well, it plans its work, assigns comrades to specific tasks, and, above all, makes preparations for the education of the members. Some of the branches that function properly have organized their work in such a manner that one meeting is a business meeting, getting reports of the activities of the fractions in the mass organizations and making assignments, while the next meeting is an educational meeting. In order that the payment of dues would not conflict with other work, some branches have established a corp of two or three comrades to attend to the dues while the meeting is going on, the branch member leaving his book at the door and receiving it when the meeting adjourns. In another branch, an envelope is furnished to each member, who places his book and money for dues, etc. into the envelop and upon adjournment of the meeting, receives his book with his dues stamps affixed, and an envelop for the next meeting.

Some of the branches have already taken up the question of reaching the organizations in the neighborhood in order to form a united front with them on various issues. Thus, in one assembly district, a branch participated in the organization of a branch of the American League Against War and Fascism. In another one, they built up a united front to approach the aldermen and assemblymen on bills pending before the City Board of Aldermen and State Assembly. On the basis of the housing survey mentioned above, the branch in question will no doubt be able to build a very broad united front for the immediate improvement of the tenement houses.

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It is clear that in branches of 75 or more members, there is greater probability of a larger number of capable comrades being available for general leadership as well as for the carrying on of discussions, to say nothing of better organizing our forces to carry out our tasks. Although the Party branches are not to become discussion clubs—*and there is a tendency in this direction*—nevertheless it is obvious that with more comrades capable of leading and participating in the discussion, the broader the education of the Party membership will become. This means not only raising the political level of the present membership of the Party, but also making it possible to recruit larger numbers into the Party. A worker coming to a branch meeting feels the strength of the Party and its ideological power. One, attending a unit meeting at a home, immediately has the feeling that the Party is either weak or must conceal itself.

This must not, however, be taken to mean that the Party looks upon the branch form as the ultimate form. On the contrary, the branch must form shop nuclei in the neighborhood and at the same time organize itself very firmly on the group form, so that in case of any attack by reactionary forces, the Party will be safeguarded. In the present political situation, however, it is possible in the *large* cities to build up branches of the Party.

However, in the organization of the branches, as above stated, the necessary preparatory steps were not taken in all cases. Furthermore, the orientation has been to a considerable extent *inward*. This is notable in the sale and distribution of the *Daily Worker* and the *Sunday Worker*. Although some Party branches have increased their sale, other branches ordered and sold fewer copies of both the *Daily Worker* and the *Sunday Worker*, but especially of the *Daily Worker*, than one of the component units did before the amalgamation. This showed a clear orientation to inner work instead of work amongst the masses. This was due partly to the fact that the branches spent so much time setting up headquarters and collecting funds to keep the headquarters functioning that they did not organize themselves to work in a manner that would make for reaching the masses and that would make the branches the center of the neighborhood activity.

Where bad results were obtained in the beginning—and in many cases the Section Committee did not recognize quickly enough the importance of the branches—confusion arose, and the Section Committee was impelled to take energetic action. This brought about order. For instance, in Williamsburg, upon the organization of the branch, owing to no steps having been taken prior to the branch organization meeting, an executive could hardly be elected. After a period of two months, when new elections were held, owing to the faulty functioning of the first executive, a large number of comrades who in the beginning had declined to accept, pleading

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various kinds of assignments, were eager to get into the leadership of the branch. They had been inspired by the results of the little work that had been done and the possibilities that existed.

There is no doubt whatever that for united front activity and for the building of the Labor Party in the Assembly District, as well as for recruiting into the Party, the Assembly Branches can become the center of neighborhood activity and be a tremendous force in the hands of the Party. They must be carefully watched by the Section and County Committees, however, because otherwise there is a danger that they will become discussion clubs and center their activities inside the headquarters instead of going into mass organizations in the neighborhood and drawing them into united action.

Our main task with regard to the assembly branches is to consolidate them, immediately install the group system and definitely orientate them to work among the masses and mass organizations in the community on pressing economic and political issues.

EXPERIENCES IN BUILDING INDUSTRIAL UNITS

The District has also formed industrial units. These units are three-fold in character:

They are composed (1) of comrades belonging to a local union, (2) composed of comrades belonging to a certain international union, but too few in number to be divided up according to locals; and (3) composed of comrades belonging to a union and of comrades not yet unionized but working in the same industry. The little experience that has been had in the last few months indicates quite clearly that *the organization of industrial units was a real step forward* as far as the Party and the work of the Party inside the unions is concerned. In the past it has been extremely difficult for the Party to mobilize all of its members belonging to a union fraction. Members of the Party in the New York District belong not only to unions, but also to other mass organizations. A comrade whose mind is not centered upon union work will become an active member of the I.W.O. and even a functionary of that organization. As a result, union activity is more or less "another" activity for him. If he is active in the unit of the Party, and also a functionary there, then he attends his fraction meeting very irregularly, and his union meetings in a similar manner. The result has been that in a certain local, where there were about 16 to 18 Party members, no more than eight to nine ever appeared at any fraction meeting. Fraction meetings, which are only called periodically, should be very well attended. Experience, however, shows that a 50 per cent attendance must be regarded as successful.

With the organization of the industrial unit, however, it is

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possible to get 14 to 15 of the 16 to 18 members to the unit meeting. In one case (a local of the building trades), the comrades meet and have the best leadership that can be procured under the existing conditions. The leadership of the unit is composed of the Party leaders in the union local. At one meeting the unit functions as a fraction. Nevertheless, Party dues are paid, assignments are made, literature distributed, etc. These assignments consist of reaching the hundreds of union members who do not attend the union meetings and inducing them to attend the meetings. The unemployed members receive assignments to work in the day room of the union, where the *Daily Worker* and Party literature are quite freely sold and discussions are engaged in on issues taken up by the *Daily Worker*. For instance, when the Central Committee statement on industrial unionism was published in the *Daily Worker*, and sold in the day room, for several hours there was a very earnest and serious discussion on this statement. At the next meeting, which is a Party unit meeting, all the campaigns of the Party are discussed, the discussion being led by the leader in the union. Thus it is clear that the comrades in this local could hardly have better leadership than they have.

However, there is another important aspect to the whole question. Union members who join the Party and are put into street units, because there is no unit in the shop in which they work, feel completely at sea in the unit. Trade union members are immediately given the assignment of selling the *Daily Worker*. Many workers do not understand such work and cannot comprehend that the selling of the *Daily Worker* is a very important Party task. Many older trade union members, having the dignity of an American trade unionist, also consider it below their dignity to sell papers on the streets or to canvass homes. They may also be given additional assignments. The result is that these trade unionists attend one or two meetings and then drop out of the Party. During the past year, the District has *lost some thousands of trade unionists* who were assigned to street units. The whole life of the unit is foreign to them. The discussions have little to do with the struggles they are involved in. It is clear therefore that through the building of the industrial units, where the problems of the union and the industry are discussed, and where plans for bringing the Party campaigns into the local and industry are mapped out, these workers can play a very important part in the building of the Party in these industries. Experience has shown so far that the attendance of the industrial unit meetings has improved and fluctuation has lessened. This shows clearly therefore that the adoption of a flexible method in the building of these units was correct.

The second type of industrial units, namely those made up of

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comrades who belong to various locals of an international union, was organized where we did not have a sufficient number of comrades in each one of the locals. Just as it is the task of other forms of the industrial unit to recruit into the Party workers in a particular shop and thereby establish a shop unit in the shop, so too the industrial unit of the second type has as its job to recruit members of the union into the Party in order to establish an industrial unit of the first type (which should be called a trade union unit), so that the unit can concentrate upon all the problems of the particular local.

In the third type of industrial unit—namely that composed of Party members in the union and those who do not yet belong to a union—one of the first tasks is to get the unorganized comrades into the union, in order not only more efficiently to carry on the work within the union, but to organize the unorganized.

In some cities this will be the main form of industrial unit organization, since the degree of trade union organization in the New York district outside of New York city is relatively small, with the exception of the building trades.

All in all we can say that the industrial unit form of organization is bearing fruit. It is orientating the comrades in a particular union or industry toward the problems common to the industry. It makes it possible to concentrate and to map out the agitation and propaganda work in the form of bulletins, distribution and sale of the *Daily Worker* and literature in a much more efficient and concrete manner. Recruiting can be much more effective, and the turnover to a great degree be stopped.

There is, however, a danger that confronts us in the organization of the industrial units. That is the depleting of street units and branches of *proletarian forces*. The trade union comrades have been a very effective part of the unit and Section machinery. Having had organizational experience in the trade unions, they are able to supply that which the other members of the Party, such as professionals, housewives and self-employed people cannot contribute. The transferring of Party members, or large numbers of them, into industrial units will weaken the street units to a great extent. It is necessary, therefore, (1) that all capable trade union comrades be *not* transferred to the industrial units, so that the existing machinery is not crippled; and (2) that *cadres* are very rapidly developed in all of the units of the Party, and especially the branches. The political and organizational problems facing the street units and assembly branches are of a very high character. The more the Party penetrates into these problems, the more the possibilities of united front and the necessity of capable forces for rallying and leading these united front actions become clear. The training of cadres thus

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becomes the outstanding problem. This can be facilitated to an extent by the organization not of haphazard discussions, but of study circles, discussion clubs, etc., for the purpose of taking up a *fundamental study of Party organization* and politics. It is necessary to train *speakers* for the branch and neighborhood discussions, for participation in the united front, election campaign, etc.

Although the branch must make this one of its serious tasks, the Section and County Committees now face this problem in a sharper form than ever before because of the possibilities that have been opened up by the establishment of the assembly branches, and the tasks that devolve upon us as a result of the new contacts established through these branches.

But, above all, in broadening our work, emphasis must be laid upon the establishment and strengthening of the shop nuclei. Any weakening in this respect would be a serious danger to the whole Party. Particularly now with *the danger of fascist reaction, with war menacing, along with the accompanying threat to the legality of the Party, and with the need for immediate specific action in the struggle against war, to fail to have Party units in the basic and strategic industries, surrounded by large numbers of workers sympathetic to the cause of the Party and the working class, would handicap our Party in the face of these crucial problems.*

The Party convention will discuss these problems and make general decisions. The application of these decisions will depend, however, upon the understanding of the District, County and Section Committees. It will require close direction and check up of the activities of the units, so that in the strengthening of the industrial units, the branches will not suffer; and, vice versa, the industrial units will not degenerate into fractions discussing only union problems and failing to educate our Party members and through them the workers on the political problems facing the working class. By the time of the Party Convention, we will have had many more concrete experiences, so that the Party will be able to make a more definite estimate and draw the right conclusions.

Obviously, however, the assembly branches and the industrial units cannot be applied everywhere. It must be left to the understanding of the District Committees *where* and *how* to organize these units so that confusion will not arise and the Party will be strengthened, instead of, as in some instances, being weakened in a certain territory because inadequate steps were taken for the proper organization of the new units. All in all, however, it must be stated that progress has been made. This has helped the New York District to establish the Party more firmly as the leader of masses of workers.

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The Working Class and Neo-Malthusianism

By V. I. LENIN

(*Translated by A. Markoff*)

[*We are publishing an article by Lenin, hitherto untranslated into English, entitled, "The Working Class and Neo-Malthusianism". This article, written on June 29, 1913, states concisely, yet definitively the position of Bolshevism on the question of Birth Control. The Leninist position on this question, as herein presented, should serve as a guide to our movement in the United States and as an effective ideological weapon against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois propaganda on this question as well as against all distortions of the Leninist teaching on neo-Malthusianism.*—EDITOR.]

AT the Pyrogov Medical Congress, a good deal of interest and the major part of the discussion was devoted to the question of abortion, that is, inducing miscarriage throught artificial means.

Mr. Lichkuss, in his report, brought forth data showing that there is an extremely strong and widespread practice of abortions in the modern, so-called cultural, states.

In New York, during one year, 80,000 abortions were performed; in France, abortions took place at the rate of about 36,000 per month; in St. Petersburg, the percentage of abortions more than doubled within the last five years.

The Pyrogov Medical Congress adopted a decision that criminal persecution of a mother who underwent an abortion should have no place in society and physicians should be punished only if it is found that the abortion was performed in the interests of mercenary gain. In the discussion, the majority having expressed themselves as averse to punitive measures against abortion, naturally linked up the discussion with the question of so-called Neo-Malthusianism (artificial means of preventing conception), discussing at the same time the social character of the problem. For example, Mr. Vikdorchik, according to the report of the newspaper [*Russkoe Slovo*, ("Russian word"—trans.)] declared that: "We should welcome measures for the prevention of conception"; and Mr. Astrakhan made the following statement, which was received with tremendous applause by the audience: "We must convince mothers to give birth

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XVI, p. 497, Russian edition.

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to children in order to have them crippled in the educational institutions, in order to turn them into cannon fodder, in order to lead them to suicide!"

If the report is true that such declaiming on the part of Mr. Astrakhan received tremendous applause, it does not surprise me. The audience consisted mainly of middle class and petty-bourgeois elements possessing a petty-bourgeois psychology. What else can we expect from them except the most vulgar type of liberalism?

But from the standpoint of the working class, it is hardly possible to find a more graphic expression of the entire reactionary character and all the pitiableness of "social Neo-Malthusianism" tnan the above-cited phrase of Mr. Astrakhan, "to give birth to children for the purpose of crippling them". Only for this? Why not bring children into the world who will carry on a better, more harmonious, more vigorous, more conscious, and more determined struggle than ours against the contemporary conditions of life which cripple and destroy our generation? It is precisely in this that we find a radical difference between the psychology of a peasant, artisan, intellectual, and petty bourgeois in general and the psychology of the proletariat. The petty bourgeois sees and feels that he is heading for destruction, that life is becoming more difficult, the struggle for existence more merciless, that his own position and the position of his family are becoming more and more helpless. This is an incontroversial fact, and the petty bourgeois protests against it. But *how* does he protest? He protests in the manner of a representative of a class which is hopelessly perishing, which despairs as to the future, a class which is downtrodden and cowardly. "There is nothing we can do; at least, we should have fewer children who suffer on account of our misery and drudgery, on account of our poverty and degradation." This is the cry of the petty bourgeois.

The class-conscious worker is far removed from this point of view. He will not permit to becloud his consciousness with such wailing, no matter how sincere and how touching it is. Yes, we workers and the mass of petty owners, we all carry a life of unbearable burdens and suffering. It is much more difficult for our generation than for our fathers; but in one sense we are more fortunate than our fathers. *We have learned and are learning fast how to fight;* not to fight singly, as the best of our fathers used to do, not in the name of slogans of the petty-bourgeois rhetoricians which are foreign to us, but in the name of our own slogans, the slogans of our class. We fight better than our fathers did; our children will fight still better, and *they will conquer.*

The working class does not perish. It is growing; it is consolidating it forces; it is becoming stronger, more courageous; it is being trained and steeled in the struggle. We are pessimists with regard to

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serfdom, capitalism, and small-scale production; but we are ardent optimists with regard to the labor movement and its aims. We are already laying the foundation for a new edifice, and our children will complete its structure. It is for this reason, and for this reason only, that we are unconditional foes of all Neo-Malthusianism, the course for the petty-bourgeois couple who are hardened and engulfed in themselves and who whisper in fright, "We, ourselves, thank God, could get along somehow, but as for children, better not to have them".

It is understood that our position on this question does not at all prevent us from demanding unconditional repeal of all laws that prohibit abortions or the dissemination of medical knowledge and advice about measures for the prevention of conception, etc. Such laws show up the hypocrisy of the ruling class. These laws do not cure the sores of capitalism, but transform them into especially malignant, especially burdensome sores for the oppressed masses.

Freedom of medical propaganda and the safeguarding of the elementary democratic rights of the citizens is one thing; the social teaching of Neo-Malthusianism is another thing. Class-conscious workers will always carry on a most merciless struggle against any attempt to fasten this reactionary, cowardly teaching on the most advanced, the strongest class of modern society, the class that is ready for the great task of bringing about the transformation of contemporary society.

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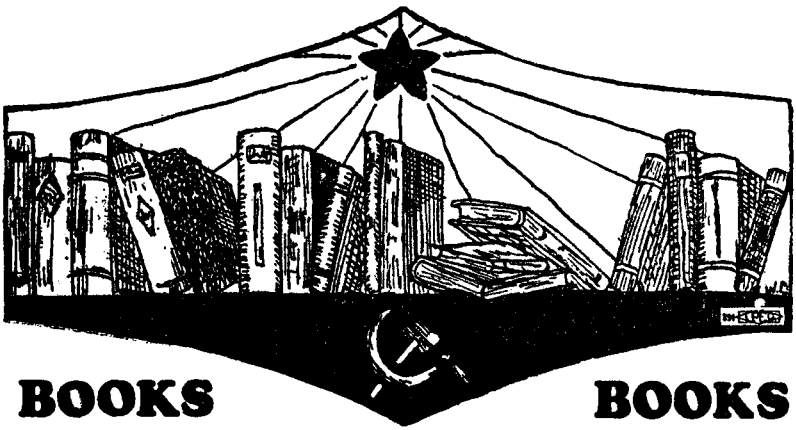

TEN PEAKS IN THE AMERICAN STRIKE RANGE

AMERICAN LABOR STRUGGLES, by SAMUEL YELLEN, *Harcourt, Brace and Company. 398 pp., illustrated. $3.50.*

Reviewed by THEODORE REPARD

AMERICAN LABOR STRUGGLES tells the story of ten great American strikes from 1877 to 1934. Within certain limits, the book serves the excellent purpose of recalling some of the most militant struggles ever conducted in this country. It lays low the hoary nonsense that the labor movement in the United States has been in any sense "backward" so far as fighting spirit goes.

One need but glance at Samuel Yellen's ten choices of pitched class battles to recognize the American proletariat's splendid tradition of militancy: 1877, the great railroad "uprisings", which inaugurated the modern era of labor unionism; 1887, the Haymarket "affair", still the classic example of ruthless frame-up by the capitalist state machinery; 1892, the Homestead Lockout, which resulted in a clash of arms between workers on one side and Pinkerton men and detectives on the other; 1894, the historic Pullman strike and the emergence of Eugene Victor Debs; 1902, the great anthracite strike, betrayed by John Mitchell and "arbitration"; 1912, the successful textile strike at Lawrence, Massachusetts; 1913, "Bloody Ludlow"; 1919, the great steel strike led by William Z. Foster; 1929, the Southern textile strikes; and 1934, the San Francisco General Strike.

Throughout the history of the United States, the workers have never flinched when called upon by circumstances or opportunity to fight for better conditions, better wages, lower hours, even up to armed struggle. In this respect, our tradition of militancy is second to none in any other country. Where the American labor movement has mainly lagged behind is organization and political self-consciousness, not militancy. For this, there are good and sufficient objective reasons, such as the hitherto relatively greater proportion and influence of the "labor aristocracy" here than elsewhere; tremendous racial and language differences dividing the working class; the absence, for a long time, of a revolutionary proletarian party to act as political leader of the working class, etc. What emerges from a reading of *American Labor Struggles* is the fact that with the disintegration of these retarding forces, the organization and political self-consciousness of the American labor movement must catch up with its militancy.

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Mr. Yellen tells the story of the strikes with well-chosen economy of detail and documentation. In his introduction, he disassociates himself from the view that history can be written "entirely free of prejudice or partiality". As a result, he shows the background and roots of strikes in the material conditions of the workers, conditions which force them to organize and rise in revolt.

Generally, Mr. Yellen develops each story in logical order, the immediate, objective conditions and causes underlying the strike, how the strike was called and how it spread, the maneuvers of the bosses, the role of the state and of the press, armed clashes between strikers and hired thugs or the "minions of the law", and, finally, the conclusion of the strike.

But while the author does a generally excellent job in giving the outline of the bare facts connected with the strikes, he is less successful in his attempts to give these events political significance and historical frame. The reason for this lies in Mr. Yellen's theory of history or understanding of history which, to some extent, vitiates his entire work. We read, in his introduction:

> "The treatment of these struggles, moreover, has not been confined to a mere sequence of events and stratagems; *one learns quickly that most strikes develop, mature, and expire in a definite pattern whose course can frequently be foretold.* Rather I have attempted although, of course, with no pretense of completeness, to analyze the causes underlying the development, to disclose the tactics and policies instrumental to the maturation, and to indicate the contribution left to the total current of the labor movement after the expiration of the struggle." (My italics—*T.R.*)

What Mr. Yellen says he attempted to do can only be commended; but he does not seem to have realized that he prevented himself from carrying out his intentions by simultaneously embracing the idea "that most strikes develop, mature, and expire in a definite pattern whose course can frequently be foretold".

This idea is a variation of the old rhythm theory of history, according to which all things rise and fall according to a "definite pattern" or rhythm of growth and decline, predictable in advance. It is a theory of mechanical change that confuses the study of history with the study of certain natural phenomena. This theory of "definite pattern" of development does not even account for all natural phenomena. It becomes positively vicious when applied to social phenomena.

This can best be seen by Mr. Yellen's handling of labor leadership in these ten strikes, especially in the more recent strikes.

The Anthracite Strike of 1902 was broken by an Arbitration Committee proposed by J. Pierpont Morgan to President Theodore Roosevelt and accepted by John Mitchell, president of the United Mine Workers, with the sole proviso that a Catholic priest be added to the commission. The commission, which was packed with an army officer, a mining engineer, a federal judge, a renegade unionist, and an operator, broke the strike. The role of Mitchell, who actually backed the sell-out, is for some reason dropped from the story, and Mr. Yellen concludes by remarking, rather casually, that "they [the strikers] had been betrayed, they believed, by the 'principle of arbitration'. . ."

Another example of how careful Mr. Yellen is about treading on the toes of the trade union bureaucrats is his chapter on the San Francisco longshoremen's strike. Here, we read:

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> "On May 28, Ryan [president of the International Longshoremen's Association] proposed a settlement to the waterfront employers, the terms of which called for recognition of the I.L.A., without, however, the closed-shop provision; joint control of hiring halls; and arbitration of wages and hours. What Ryan failed to comprehend in submitting this settlement plan was the temper of the longshoremen."

Judging from his own account, Mr. Yellen must have known that he was pulling his punches in respect to Joseph P. Ryan. The three points which Ryan was willing to surrender represented *everything the strikers had been fighting for.* Is it true that Ryan *simply* "failed to comprehend" the "temper of the longshoremen"?

Now, a thorough analysis of why men like John Mitchell, of the miners, or Joseph P. Ryan, of the longshoremen, broke strikes would refute the idea that there is a definite pattern common to all strikes. It would be seen that when "strikes develop, mature and *expire*", then they do so for very definite reasons, never inevitable and certainly not predictable. Under militant leadership, strikes may develop, mature, and *succeed.*

Nine out of the ten strikes chosen by Mr. Yellen were lost, so that his definite pattern seems to point to defeat. This is the sad political lesson taught, inadvertantly perhaps, by *American Labor Struggles.* The facts are quite different. Lost strikes "expire" for definite and assignable reasons, not in order to fulfill a metaphysical pattern. This would demand concrete analysis of strike leadership. Mr. Yellen fails to supply such analysis, with the result that the picture of the strike is blurred and vague, instead of concrete and definite.

Flowing from this same general cause is the omission of the Seattle general strike from the roster of ten and the failure to link the textile strikes in 1929 with the textile strike of 1934. All of Mr. Yellen's choices are unexceptionable, except that the true magnitude and possibilities of the American labor movement are dwarfed with the omission of the Seattle general strike of 1919. Here was a strike, the first of its kind in America, carried out by American Federation of Labor unions in which the unions practically took over the city in the course of the strike. Garbage wagons and funeral cars were permitted to proceed only with permits from the Strike Committee. Milk was sold from 35 stations by the Milkmen's Union. A Labor Guard patrolled the city's streets.

In the case of the textile strikes of 1929, Mr. Yellen isolates this, as he does most of the other strikes, by mentioning historical factors in the most incidental and insufficient way. No link is provided between the textile strikes of 1929 and those of 1934. The result is a certain narrowing of the possibilities inherent even in the narration of the stories of the individual strikes. They stand out too much like isolated episodes rather than the high peaks in a line of historical development.

Most of the research in *American Labor Struggles* is reliable, though there are certain disconcerting exceptions. The worst blunder is the following description of the differences between the Marxists and Lassalleans during the period of the First International in the U.S.A.:

> "The Internationalists held for secret arming and direct preparation for the social revolution, with trade unionism and politics as auxiliary activities to be strictly watched lest they led into the treacherous waters of opportunism. The Lassalleans, on the other

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hand, sought the gradual achievement of a new society through education, political organization, and parliamentary procedure."

Here the author apparently confuses the Chicago anarchists and the Internationalists or Marxists. This may be due partly to the fact that Albert Parsons, one of the Haymarket martyrs, turned anarchist after belonging to the First International (International Workingmen's Association).

The actual differences between the followers of Marx and Lassalle in the U.S.A. (the followers of Marx were called Internationalists because of their connection with the First International, which implied international sympathies) turned mainly on the question of trade union work. The Marxists believed in both economic or trade union and political action, although they considered the latter subsidiary to the former. The Lassalleans, on the other hand, were bitter opponents of all trade union action because of their faith in the mistaken and vicious "iron law of wages", according to which the workers could never better their conditions under capitalism. Lassalle advocated two cure-alls: general suffrage or political action and state subsidies to producers' cooperatives.

The lapses in matters of fact are otherwise not so serious as this one and the research is generally of a high order.

American Labor Struggles has some serious shortcomings; but for all that, it represents a contribution to the history of the American labor movement which should not be neglected by anyone interested in the subject.

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